

# REAL "YOU JUST NEED TO DO IT CONRAD"

HOW MICHELLE CARTER CONVINCED HER BOYFRIEND TO KILL HIMSELF

# CRIME

## KILLER CASE FILES

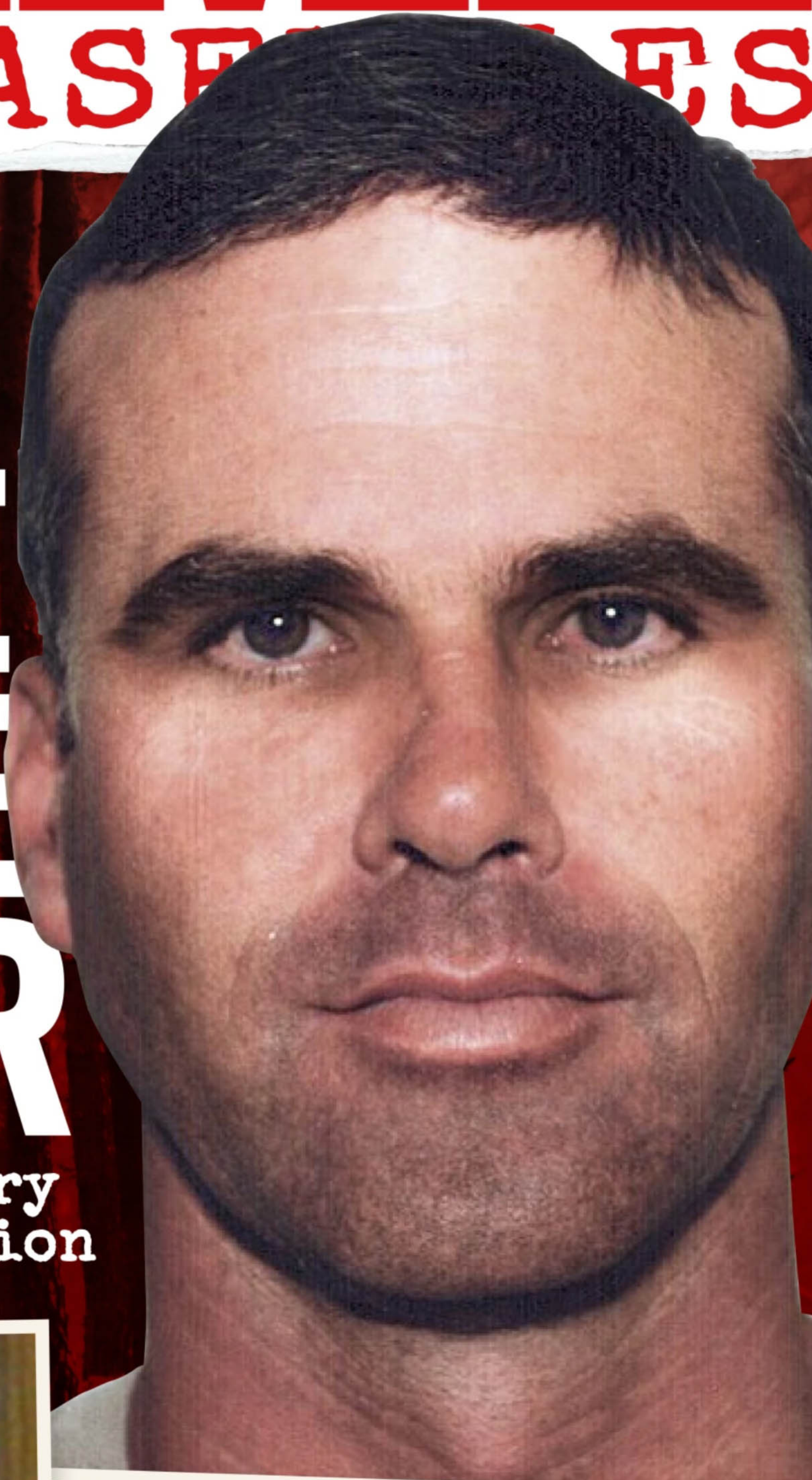


**BILLY-JO'S  
BLOOD ON  
THE PATIO**

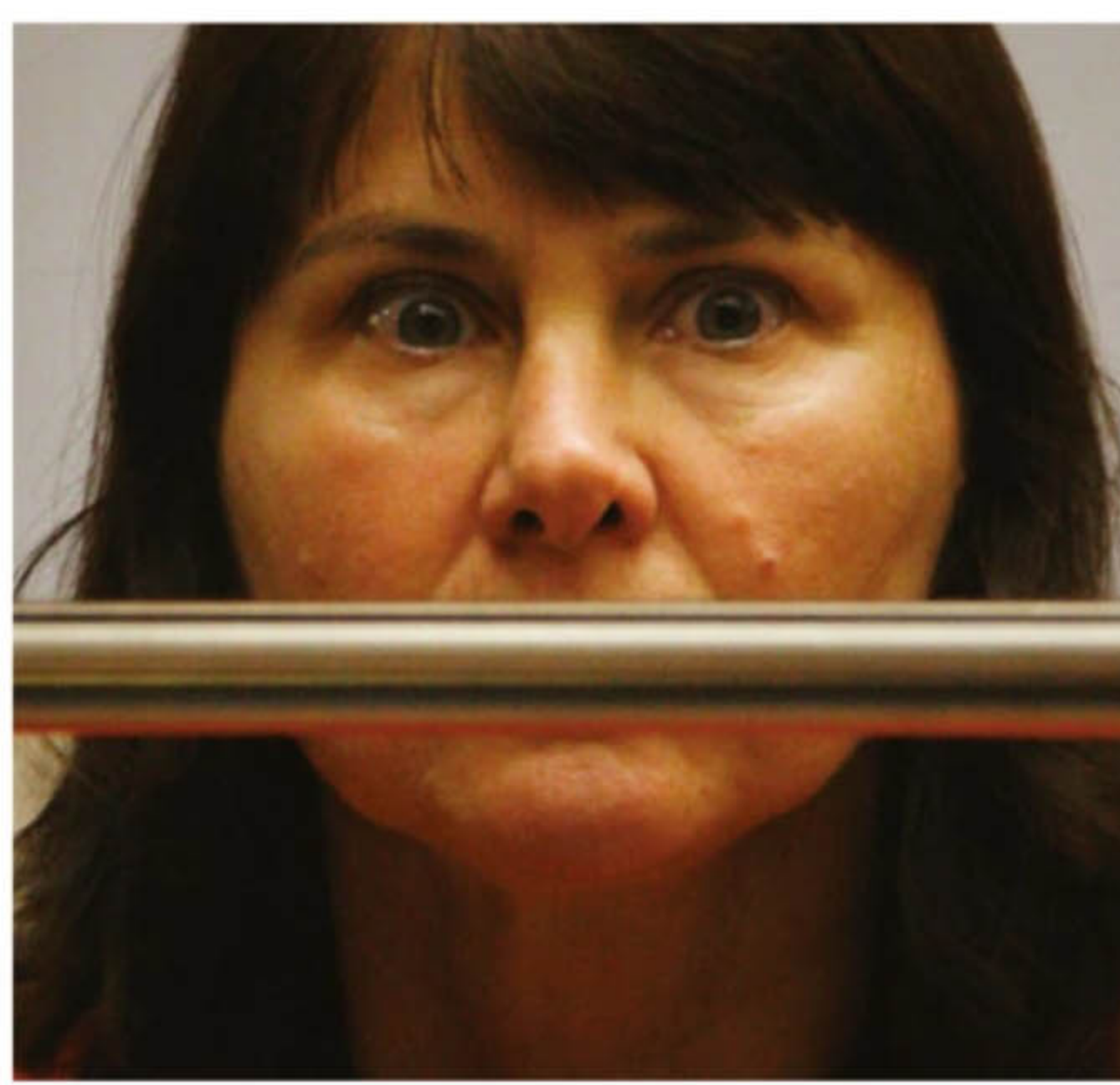
**"HE SENT A SHIVER  
DOWN MY SPINE"**

# MEET THE YOSEMITE MONSTER

FBI Agent Rinek recalls Cary Stayner's chilling confession



**ARUBA KILLER'S  
LIES & CONCEIT**



**JEALOUS COP  
MURDERS RIVAL**



**HIS MOMENT OF TRUTH**



**BODIES IN THE WOODS**



**INSIDE A WHITE  
PRISON GANG**

## CIRCUS OF HORRORS

THE SICKENING END TO PUBLIC EXECUTIONS IN FRANCE

- DIGGING FOR JIMMY HOFFA
- JAILBREAK GENIUS ESCAPES TWICE
- POOL TOY PERVERT - AND MORE



# GET INSIDE CHARLES MANSON'S BLOODTHIRSTY CULT

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# REAL CRIME™

## KILLER CASEFILES

Yosemite National Park is one of most stunning regions of natural beauty in the USA, if not the world. With vast tracts of wilderness punctuated by dramatic peaks and blanketed in trees, explorers can lose themselves in nature. Perhaps they can even get lost and fall foul of the many predatory beasts that inhabit the park. For a while in the mid 1990s, the mountains and forests at the edge of Yosemite proved to be an ideal hunting ground for a particularly savage predator. Cary Stayner killed to fulfil an insatiable dark fantasy, and if not for the efforts of FBI agent Jeff Rinek he might have claimed many more victims. We've spoken to the now-retired agent Rinek, who told us about the moment Stayner confessed, and the mental toll his career hunting killers has taken on him.

Stayner was a handyman at the Cedar Lodge hotel in the El Portal village on the edge of the wilderness



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Acute Graphics, AFP Photo, Alamy, Andrew Lichtenstein, Corbis, Getty Images, Rebekka Hearl, REX Features, Shutterstock, Thinkstock, Topfoto

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UK orderline & enquiries **0344 848 2852**  
Overseas order line and enquiries **+44 (0) 344 848 2852**  
Online orders & enquiries [www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk](http://www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk)  
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**Printed by** William Gibbons & Sons Limited, 26 Planetary Road, Willenhall, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV13 3XB

**Distributed by** Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU [www.marketforce.co.uk](http://www.marketforce.co.uk) Tel: 0203 787 9001

ISSN 2059-1837

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# CONTENTS

## CASE NOTES

### 06 HANDS OF A MURDERER, AMELIE'S LAST RIDE, SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN, AND MORE

Stunning crime photos, present and past, from around the world

### 14 IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY

For a short period in the mid 1990s, Yosemite National Park was the territory of a beast more fearsome than any wild animal

### 22 "HE SENT A SHIVER DOWN MY SPINE"

We speak to former FBI agent Jeff Rinek about the moment Cary Stayner confessed to being the Yosemite Park Killer

### 30 "YOU JUST NEED TO DO IT CONRAD"

How texting teen Michelle Carter convinced her ailing boyfriend to commit suicide

## MINUTE BY MINUTE

### 38 EXPLOSIVE JAILBREAK

How Rédoine Faïd – TV personality, author and bank robber – escaped prison for the second time

### 44 WHAT HAPPENED TO HOFFA? – PART THREE

In our final instalment, we explore the dwindling avenues of investigation into Hoffa's disappearance

## BREAKTHROUGH

### 52 CATCHING A KILLER COP

After 23 years, cold-case detectives link the unsolved murder of a young bride to a cover-up in their own department

## UNSOLVED CASE

### 54 WHO KILLED BILLIE-JO?

Foster child Billie-Jo Jenkins was beaten to death on her own patio in 1997. Despite numerous suspects, her murder is still unsolved

### 62 THE ARYAN BROTHERHOOD

Meet the white supremacist US prison gangs, the most murderous group of inmates in the country's ethnically divided prison system

### 68 ARUBA KILLER'S MISSING TRIAL

Joran van der Sloot was already convicted of murdering one young woman: can the truth of a second murder be picked out of his lies?

### 76 THE CIRCUS OF HORRORS

How the ghastly guillotining of spree killer Eugen Weidmann finally put an end to bloody public executions in France forever

## STRANGE CASE

### 82 POOL TOY SEX PERVERT PUBLIC INDECENCY

"He's always had a fascination for plastic"

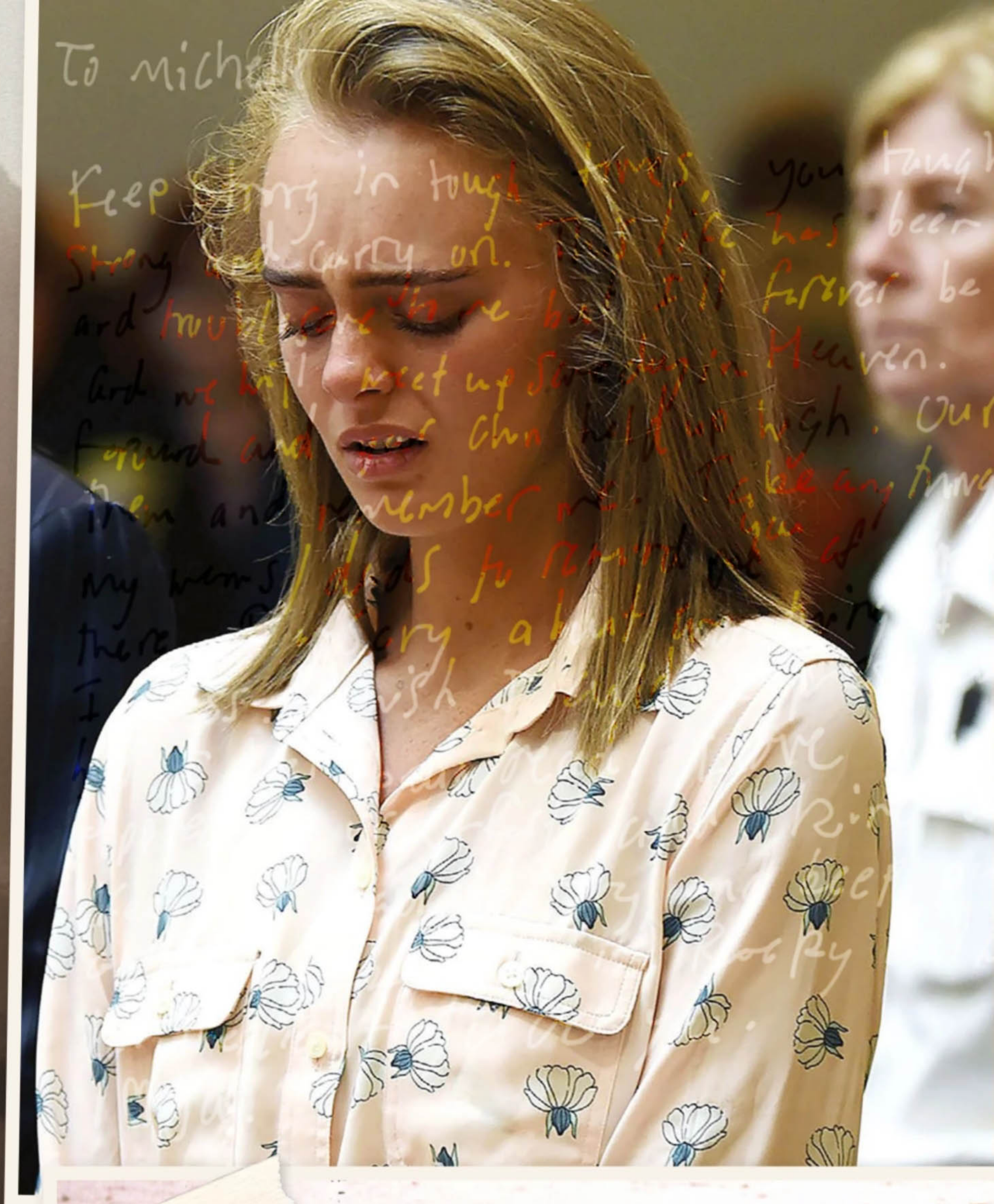
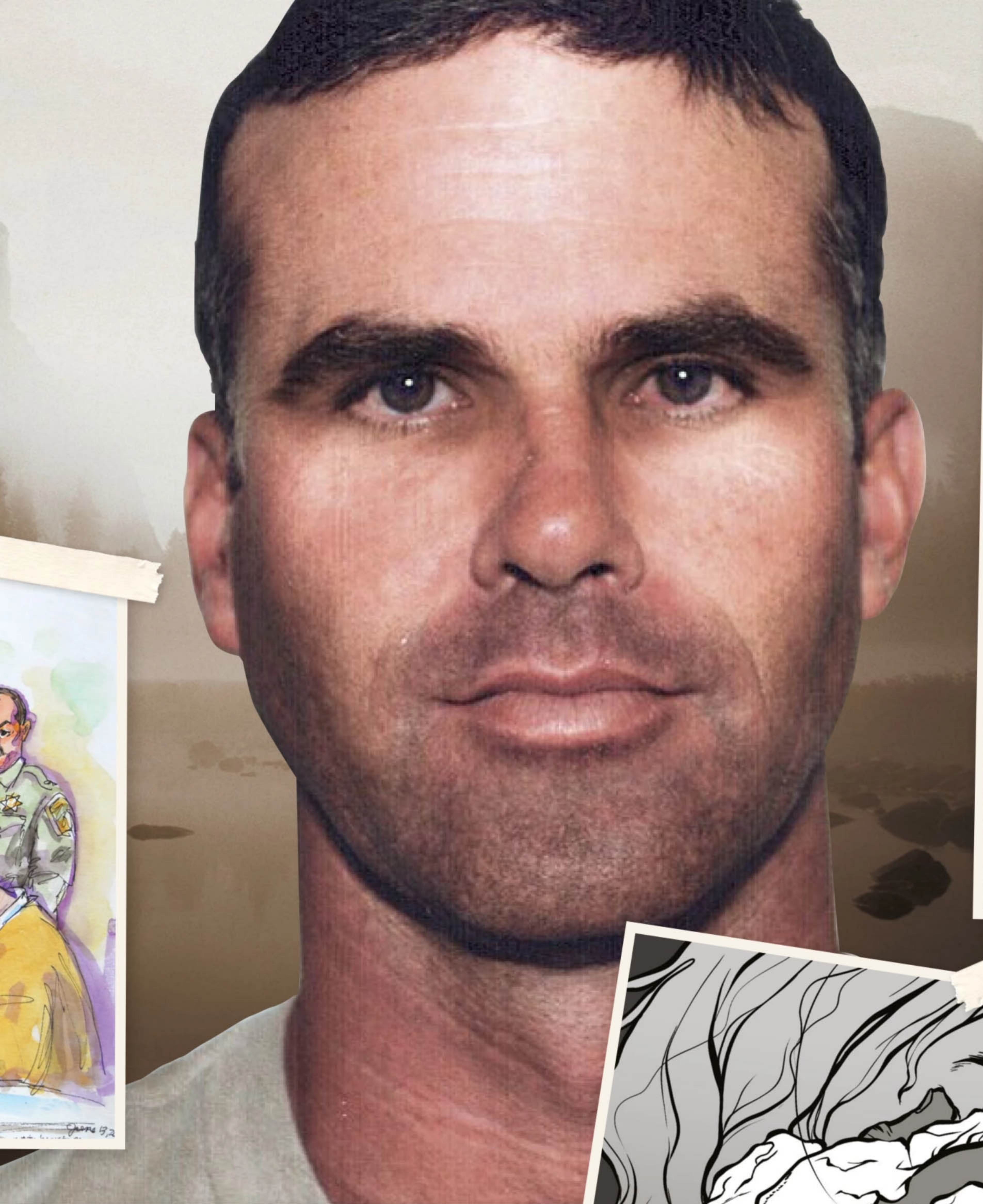
CARY STAYNER'S  
CHILLING CONFESSION



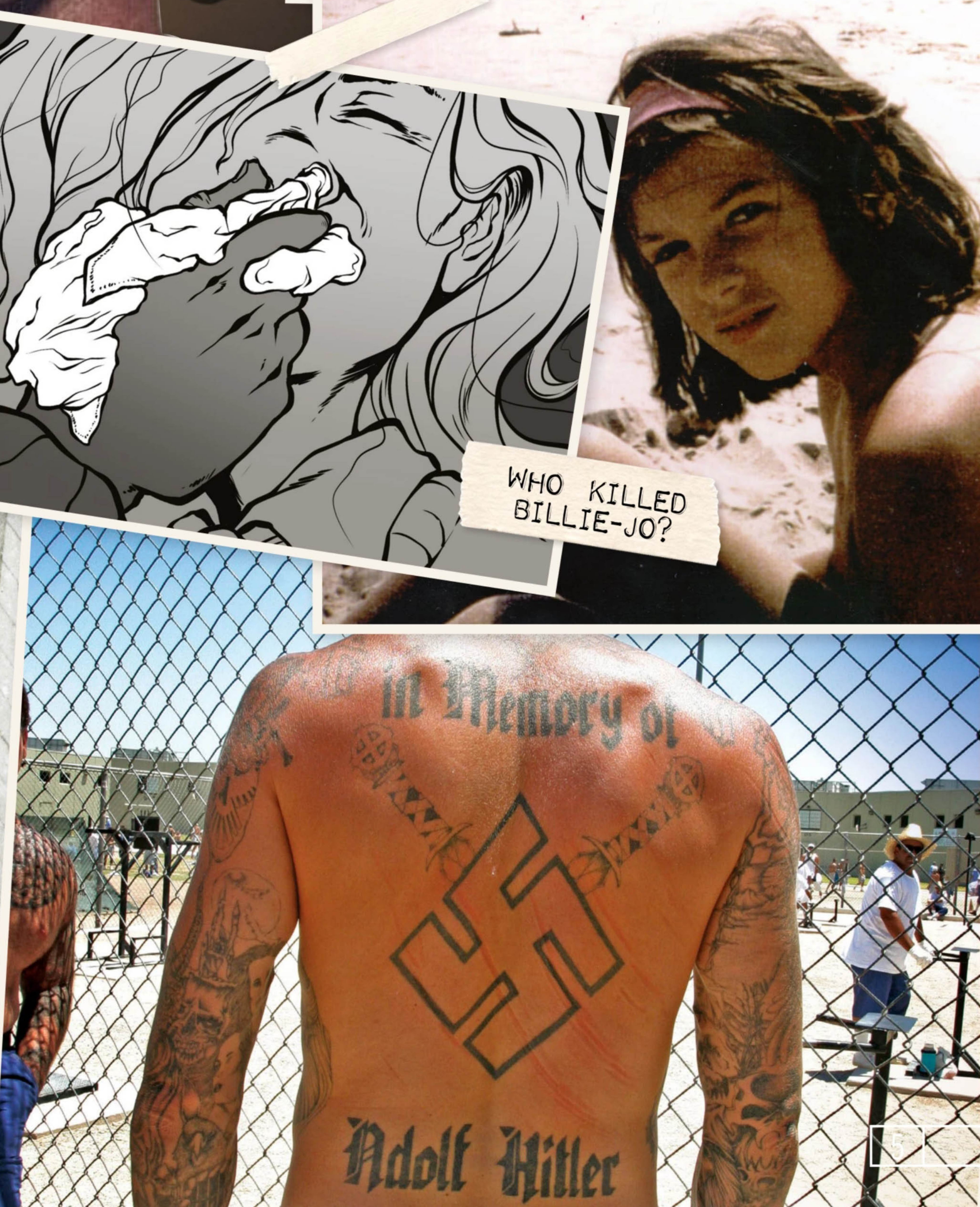
FRANCE'S FINAL  
PUBLIC EXECUTION







WHO KILLED  
BILLIE-JO?





INDIANA, USA, 1 SEPTEMBER 1997

# HANDS OF A MURDERER

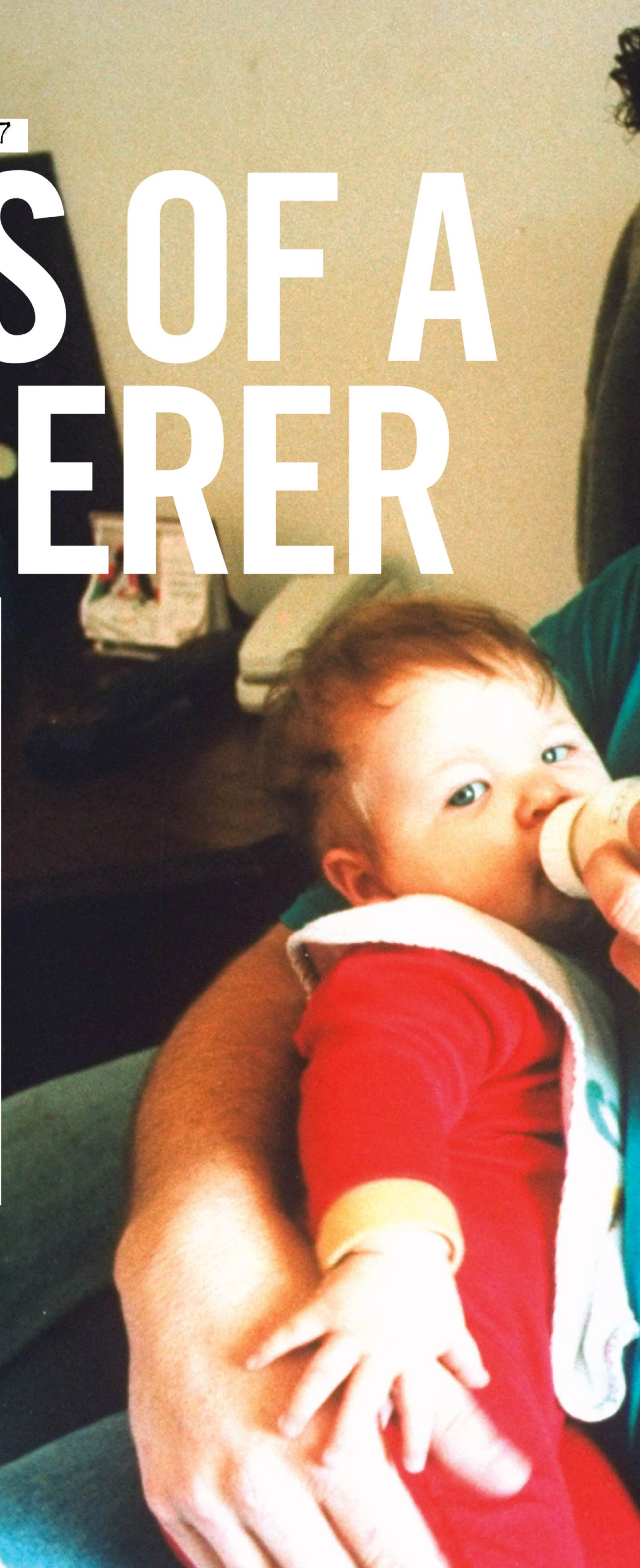
Orville Lynn Majors looked like a caring nurse, family man and all-round good guy. In reality he was anything but

**H**e might look like a doting dad in this photo, but nurse Orville Lynn Majors was a serial killer harbouring a burning hatred of his elderly patients – witnesses later suggested that he believed they should be gassed.

Not surprisingly, ‘doting dad’ and ‘caring nurse’ were the compassionate images he preferred to portray, such as here: where Majors is seen bottle-feeding Mikayla, the daughter of his live-in lover Nancy Ryan. While actively presenting an image of a heavenly angel, Majors was earning himself a 380-year prison sentence as an ‘angel of death’. Between 1993 and 1995 he’s believed to have murdered as many as 130 patients.

He was arrested in December 1997 only months after this photo was taken. During his trial, a number of witnesses came forward with disturbing character evidence. According to their testimonies, Majors had no regard or compassion for those in his care. They also testified that he hated his patients, especially any whose needs increased his workload. Majors himself acknowledged as much. Many of his victims were patients with the greatest needs or the most demanding or difficult personalities. The more they irritated him, the more likely they were to die.

This angel of death himself died on 24 September 2017 while serving life for six murders – a fraction of his suspected total. His death ironically proved that the pitiless man did in fact have a heart – he died of an unspecified heart ailment.











LONDON, UK, 19 AUGUST 2004

# AMELIE'S LAST RIDE

Amelie Delagrang went out one night looking for fun, a few drinks and a good time. Instead she found Levi Bellfield

**M**urderer Levi Bellfield is now safely under lock and key after committing a string of horrific crimes against young women and girls, including the murder of 13-year-old Milly Dowler.

Amelie Delagrang, a 22-year-old French student, was one of his victims. Boarding a bus for a night out in West London, this CCTV image is one of the last moments she was seen alive. It shows the French student boarding the 267 bus outside a local pub, the Old Post Sorting House. Later, about 20 minutes after this image was captured, she made the fateful decision to take a shortcut across a cricket field in Twickenham Green.

Unfortunately no cameras caught Bellfield, although he would have been close at hand at the time. Delagrang was unaware and vulnerable to a predator like him. Just another young woman out for a few drinks and a good time, she didn't have a care in the world. But for Bellfield she was a victim made to order.

Amelie Delagrang hadn't done anything to catch Bellfield's eye. She hadn't provoked him, flirted with him or rejected him. She'd done nothing out of place or out of line. She simply had the terrible misfortune to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Bellfield was eventually convicted in 2008.







NEW YORK, USA, 20 JUNE 1995

# SEVEN VICTIMS IN TWO STATES

Ex-convict Darnell Collins had a huge drug habit and a murderous rage. He satisfied both in brutal fashion, in a drug-fuelled killing spree

**D**rug addict, stalker and ex-convict Darnell Collins was only 33 years old when he murdered seven people in New York and New Jersey in only five days. Collins later died in a shootout with a dozen police officers. Collins was well-known locally for his drug habit and for his extreme violence while he was under the influence – which he was more often than not.

Collins started by murdering Shirley Gates, mother of his ex-girlfriend April. Not satisfied, Collins then murdered April herself for reporting him for violating a restraining order. William Dawson, a New Jersey drug dealer, was next. His girlfriend Stacey Smith was also shot and critically wounded in the same attack.

Collins continued to strike at random, robbing and murdering as he went. With every cop in New Jersey looking for him he fled to familiar ground – New York City.

Next on his trail of terror was Jose Gabriel Escarpetta, a New York City parking attendant. After fleeing New Jersey Collins had nothing left to lose. Shot on the street at around 2pm, Jose was Collins's first victim in New York City. He wasn't the last.

Collins murdered Jeffrey Rork and David Roth at 138 West 25th Street, shooting both in the head for seemingly no reason. That same night cab driver Emmanuel Malan was shot in the back of the head, making him Collins's final victim, before the NYPD caught up and shot him dead.









TOKYO, JAPAN, 14 AUGUST 1989

# SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN

A serial killer, necrophile and cannibal, Tsutomu Miyazaki must without doubt rank as one of the most appalling criminals in Japanese history

If ever Japan's gallows needed a poster boy, Tsutomu Miyazaki is it. Dubbed the 'Otaku Murderer' and 'Little Girl Murderer' by the Japanese press, Miyazaki molested and murdered four young girls between August 1988 and June 1989.

He disposed of one, four-year-old Mari Konno, by burning her bones, while burying or keeping the rest of her body. It was her bones that police found in a furnace owned by Miyazaki. Even Japan's most hardened detectives could barely believe what they found.

Arrested for sexual assault on 23 July 1989, Miyazaki, a friendless loner largely rejected by his family and bullied for his deformed arms, was quickly exposed. A search of his apartment uncovered thousands of videotapes, some including pictures and footage of the missing girls.

They weren't Miyazaki's only victims. Disgusted by his son's deeds, Miyazaki's father refused to fund his legal defence, and in 1994 he took his own life – the shame was simply too much.

When his trial began on 30 March 1990 Miyazaki blamed his actions on an evil alter ego he dubbed 'Rat Man'. If Miyazaki was hoping for leniency by claiming insanity then the trial judge and Japanese judiciary weren't impressed. Miyazaki was sentenced to death on 14 April 1990. Tokyo's High Court upheld the sentence on 28 June 2001 and the Supreme Court of Justice agreed on 17 January 2006.

So did Japan's minister of justice, Kunio Hatoyama, who had to personally sign Miyazaki's death warrant. He went to the gallows on 17 June 2008.

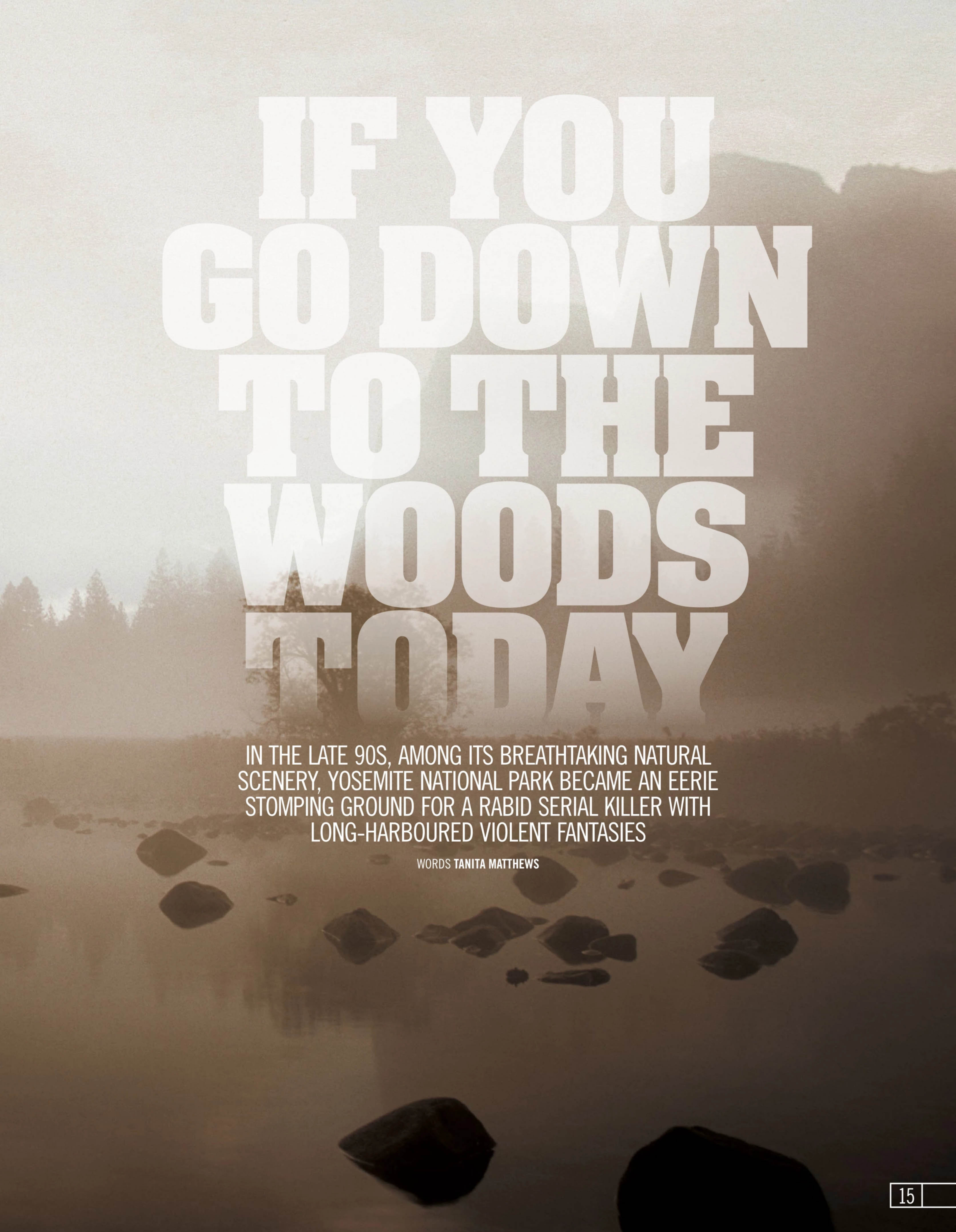












# IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY

IN THE LATE 90S, AMONG ITS BREATHTAKING NATURAL  
SCENERY, YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK BECAME AN EERIE  
STOMPING GROUND FOR A RABID SERIAL KILLER WITH  
LONG-HARBOURED VIOLENT FANTASIES

WORDS TANITA MATTHEWS



The Yosemite National Park in California attracts millions of visitors per year. But in 1999 the park had an even bigger, even more looming and sinister presence than Bigfoot: a murderous handyman who preyed on women for his deviant sexual fantasies, before slashing, shooting and strangling them to death. While his first three victims stumped the FBI and local police forces, it was the fourth murder that led them to the culprit who seemed an unlikely suspect at first: Cary Stayner, the older brother of kidnap victim turned local hero, Steven Stayner. Since Steven's disappearance in 1972, Cary had been overshadowed by his brother's survivor status. While Steven was held captive in a paedophile's den in the Yosemite vicinity, Cary lurked in the background, eventually mirroring some of the depraved actions of his brother's molester. When Steven eventually escaped, his story made the front pages of every national paper in the country, but when Cary also made the front pages years later, it was for completely different reasons.

## THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT CARY

Serenity was not a quality the Stayner household possessed. Although parents Delbert and Kay raised their five children competently, they lacked affection towards them. While Kay's was merely perfunctory, her husband's attention to the children was deemed unhealthy by state authorities, who recommended that he attend therapy after he was accused of molesting his daughters. But it was not just the Stayner girls who were supposedly affected by abuse. In 1972, Cary, the eldest of the children, was sexually assaulted by his uncle Jerry. One night Cary claimed that he woke up to find Jerry removing his underwear and attempting to molest him.

Just weeks before Christmas, the youngest son Steven, was abducted by paedophile Kenneth Parnell on his way home from school in Merced. The seven-year-old boy was taken to a rented cabin at Yosemite Lodge where Parnell worked as a motel worker. Once there, he told the young boy that his parents had moved away and had signed custody over to him. For seven years Steven, who was renamed 'Denis', was forced to live as sick Parnell's sex slave and encouraged to call his abductor 'dad'.

Steven's parents never gave up looking for their son. Delbert 'went berserk for a time,' roaming the streets in his

pickup truck with a sawn off shotgun and a suspicious mind looking for 'Stevie'. He confessed he had neglected his other children as a result, including Cary who was only 11-years-old at the time of his brother's abduction and the sexual assault by his uncle. At school Cary was bullied for the bald patches on his head, results of the trichotillomania (the urge to pull out hair) he was diagnosed with as a toddler. But another uncontrollable compulsion was taking place inside his head.

Cary claimed that since the age of seven he had envisioned gruesome images such as piles of dead bodies and that by adolescence the images progressed to scores of women being forced to march, stripped naked and gang raped. His head was filled with voices, music and buzzing sounds and he believed he was hearing messages from the television. At 16 he became a predator, a peeping tom who would peer into the bathroom when his sisters were changing and try to persuade his cousins to expose themselves to him by 'hypnotising' them. He reportedly hid under the bed of a neighbour girl and touched her breast before exposing himself to her, but the girl simply told him to go away. Cary never seemed to have girlfriends, despite his attractive physique. Sexual relations were sparse and often disappointing as the young man failed to sustain an erection much to his frustration.

Every night Cary whispered a wish to his lucky star: "Wherever my little brother is tonight, bring him home safe and sound. Please bring Steven home." It was a wish that was granted in March 1980 when 14-year-old Steven escaped Parnell's clutches with his latest captive in tow, five-year-old Timmy White.

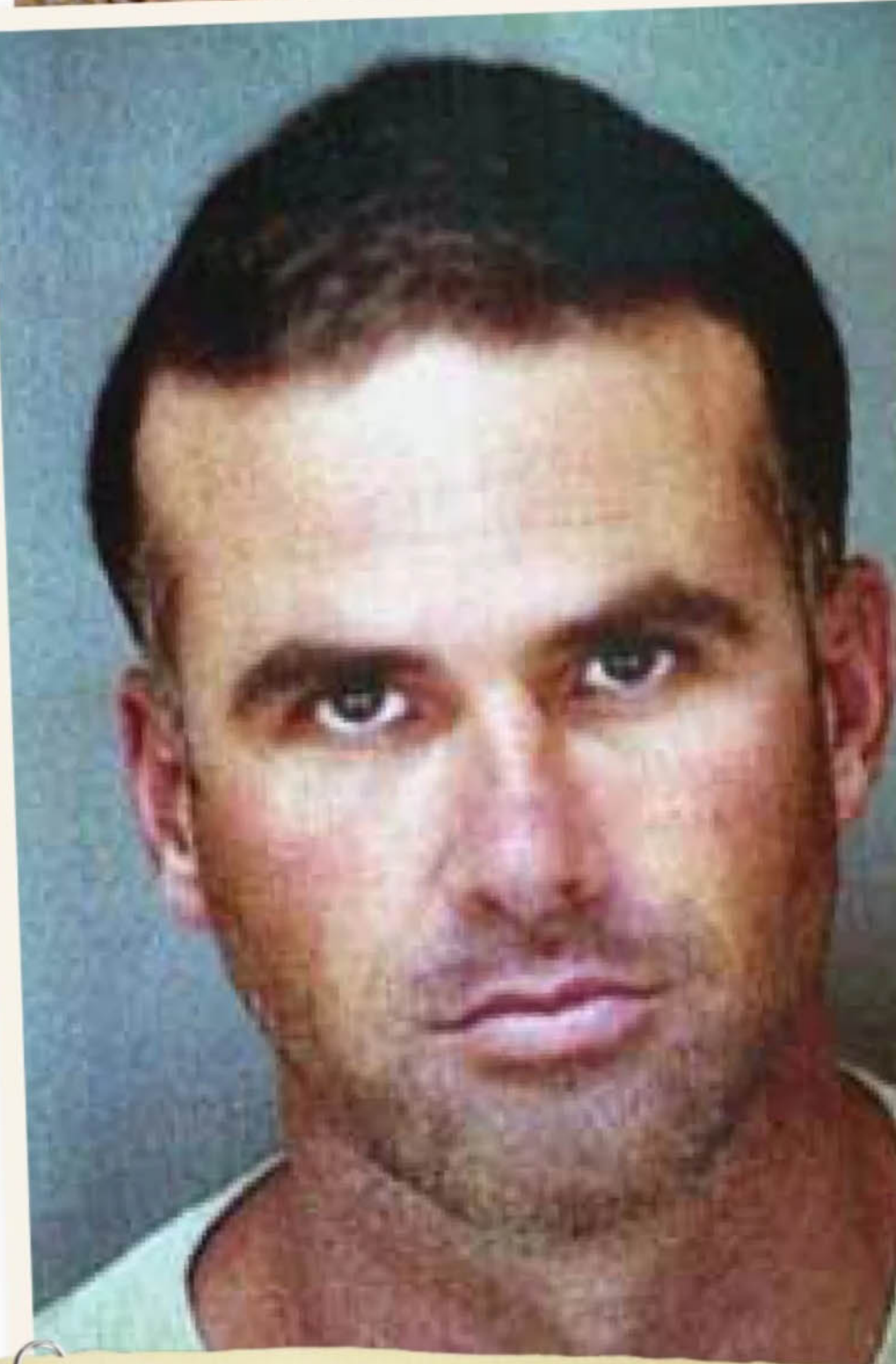
Cary was ecstatic that his brother was home, but within a few months grew jealous of the attention Steven received. He was a national hero for rescuing Timmy, and the family obsessed even more over the child, but in Cary's eyes Steven had done what anyone else would have done in his situation. Despite what the family had been through, Kay and Delbert decided against therapy and didn't allow any of the children, including Steven, to see a therapist to talk about the abduction. The family simply carried on as though nothing had happened, a fairly difficult task especially when Steven was called to testify against Parnell and recall the thousands of times "dad" had raped him.

At school Cary had been a bright student academically, but his artistic skills were what stood out. Growing up he wanted to be a cartoonist; his satirical sketches had been a promising feature in the school newspaper. But Cary saw himself as a loser and didn't want to face what he thought to be a sure rejection from art colleges in the area. He held down menial jobs in his teenage years eventually finding employment as a handyman at the Cedar Lodge Motel in El Portal just outside of the Yosemite Park entrance, and just a stone's throw away from the exact cabin his brother had been held captive in.

## ROOM 509

Cary liked to be a loner, that's why the great outdoors of Yosemite National Park suited him. Those who knew him remember how he had been friendly but failed to sustain meaningful relationships. But on 15 February 1999, as he

**“ KAY AND DELBERT DECIDED AGAINST THERAPY AND DIDN'T ALLOW THE CHILDREN, INCLUDING STEVEN, TO SEE A THERAPIST ”**

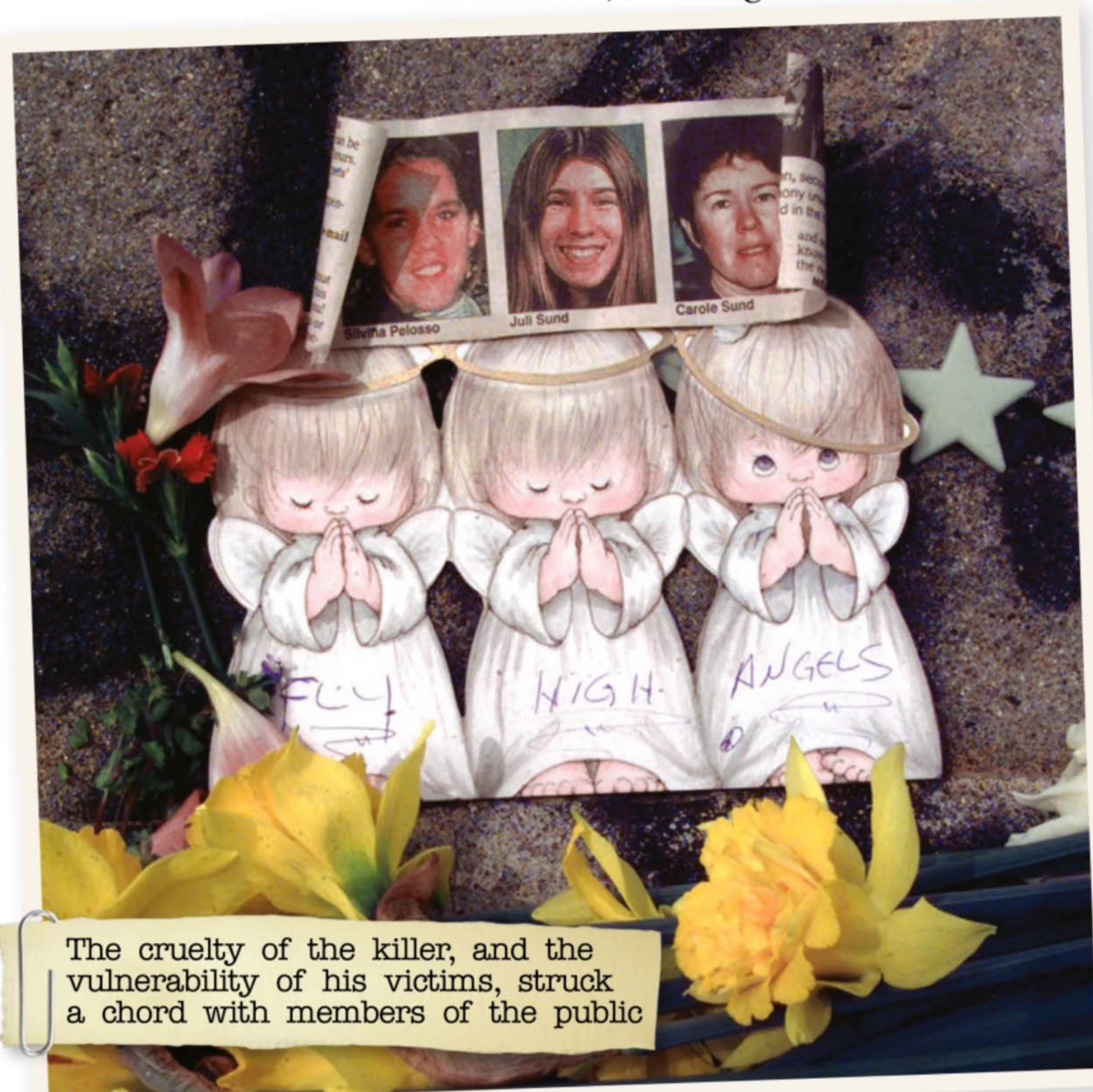


Cary Stayner described keeping a pre-prepared murder kit in his backpack for the opportune moment



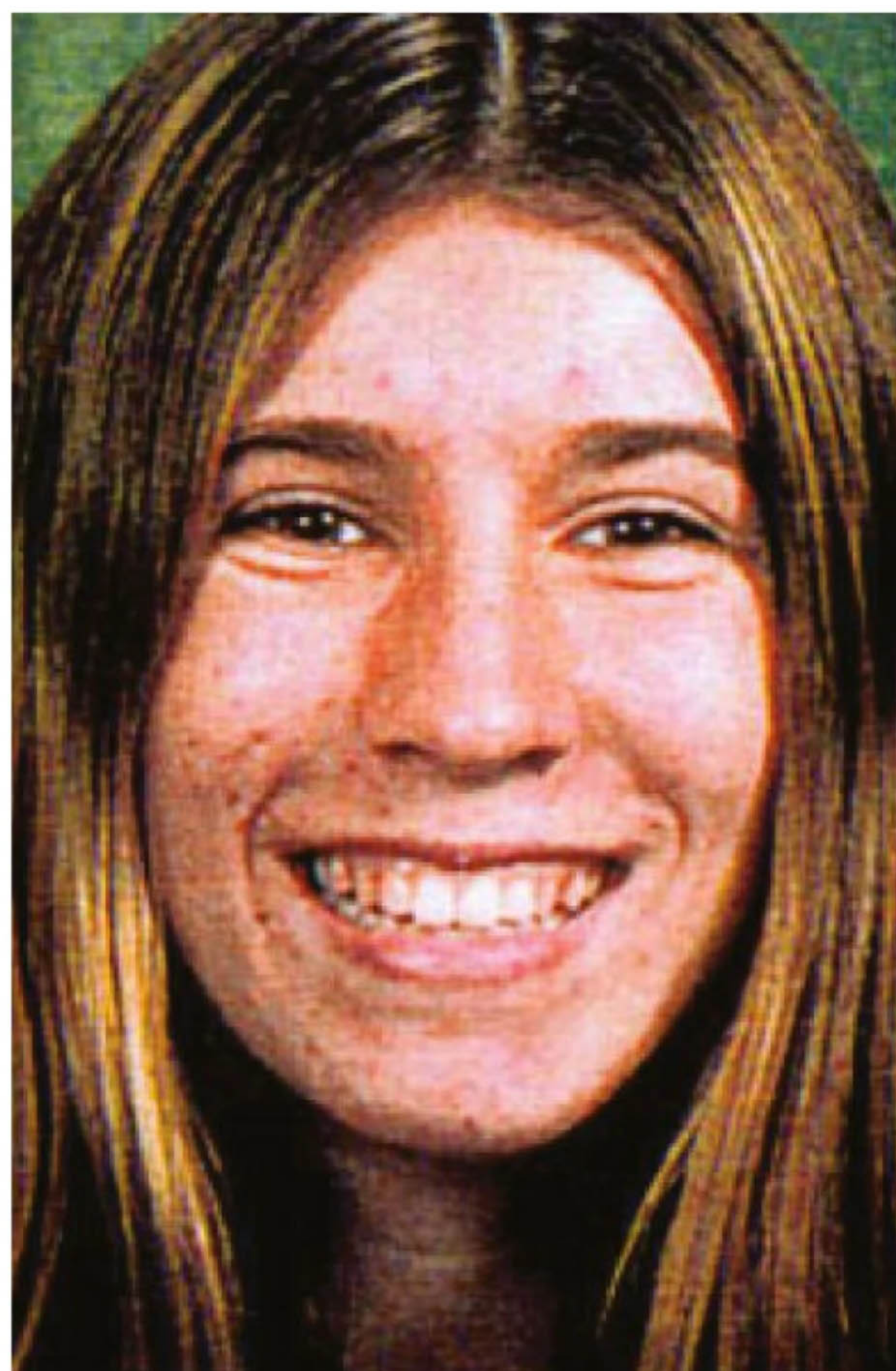
**ABOVE** As a seasonal handyman at the lodge, Cary lived on the second floor by himself. He had been out on a walk when his urges got the better of him and he murdered a trio of women

**RIGHT** Carole Sund had taken her daughter Julie and foreign exchange student Silvina Polosso to Yosemite National Park to show the beauty and serenity of America's nature. Their excursion, however, took a dark and terrible turn



The cruelty of the killer, and the vulnerability of his victims, struck a chord with members of the public





**ABOVE** Carole Sund; **MIDDLE** Silvina Polosso; **RIGHT** Julie Sund





walked back to his cabin he peered through the window of an occupied room at the otherwise empty lodge, and saw two pretty teenage girls and an older woman watching television and reading. He saw it as a moment to pounce and make his fantasy their nightmare. Carole Sund and her 15-year-old daughter Juli had decided to show their foreign exchange student, 16-year-old Silvina Pelosso the breathtaking landmarks of the US, starting with Yosemite Park.

Travelling from their hometown of Yreka, the trio had arrived at the park the previous day and checked into room 509. The three women spent two days exploring the beautiful sights of the park, home to its famous sequoia trees, Tunnel View and spectacular granite cliffs. Just after 7.30pm, Carole phoned her husband from the lodge, telling him that she and the girls would be leaving in the morning and making their way to San Francisco Airport. Photographs taken on a camera belonging to one of the girls showed detectives that at around 10.30pm the family were laughing and joking around, memories that in normal circumstances would be remembered for a lifetime, but had quickly turned sour with a knock at the door.

Blagging his way into the cabin, Cary claimed to be inspecting a leak and headed straight for the bathroom, emerging a short while later holding a gun. Within minutes he had tied the three of them up, slapping duct tape across their mouths to silence them. Securing the two teenage girls in the bathroom, Cary pushed Carole onto the bed and began to 'nonchalantly' strangle her, a task he later recalled to be much more difficult than he had imagined. Once dead, Carole's body was placed in the boot of her rented car. Back inside the cabin, he cut the clothing away from Juli and Silvina and sexually assaulted them, but he grew so enraged by Silvina's sobbing that he dragged her into the bathroom

and strangled her, returning to sexually assault the last live girl in the cabin for several hours. When Juli asked if he was going to kill her, he made no reply and instead tied her up in front of the TV in the next room. He dumped Silvina's body in the boot of the car with Carole's and returned to Juli.

Before fleeing the crime scene he made sure to perform a precautionary sweep of the room to make it look as though the girls had showered and left.

Cary took a pillowcase and a pink blanket from room 509 and wrapped Juli up, placing her in the front of the car with him. Unsure of exactly what he was supposed to do with the two bodies in the trunk and the young girl in the front, he drove through the forest, making 'small talk' with Juli. Just east of Modesto at the Lake Don Pedro, Cary pulled the car over. He removed Juli from the passenger's seat and carried her up the trail, 'kind of like a groom carrying a bride over the threshold,' before placing her on a steep hillside above the lake, where he sexually assaulted her for the last time.

When he was done he kissed and hugged Juli one last time and took hold of her hair atop of her head and tipped her head back, exposing her neck. He told her he loved her before dragging a knife across her throat. As she thrashed about, Cary turned away and waited for the girl to die. Back at the car, he struck a match and burned the vehicle with the two bodies inside before taking a taxi back to the lodge.

As Carol's husband stood expectantly at San Francisco Airport, Carole and the girls failed to show up. He assumed he had arrived at the wrong time, but when he was unable to reach his wife by phone he called the lodge and asked them to check the room. The room key had been left in the room, their belongings were gone, the towels were damp as though someone had showered and their car, a red 1999 Pontiac Grand Prix was nowhere to be seen. Staff assumed they had

**ABOVE** Three women disappeared inside Yosemite Park and the community's sense of safety was rocked. Eager to know what happened to them vast searches of the park were carried out

**RIGHT** Cary claims when he was seven he was sat in his parent's car waiting for them to come back from grocery shopping. Peering through the supermarket women he began to fantasise about killing the female cashiers



## INSIDE ROOM 509

STAYNER TOLD THE FBI HOW HE TRICKED A SUSPICIOUS CAROLE SUND INTO LETTING HIM IN

**Cary Stayner:** But what happened before I knocked on their door, I was knocking on the doors around their door.

**Agent John Boles:** OK.

**CS:** To just kinda desensitize them to the knock on their door.

**AJB:** Would you talk loudly, you know hey, (IA).

**CS:** Maintenance. Then I'd open up the doors and walk in, wait a few seconds, slam the door, go to the next door, knock on it, go inside. Then I finally ended up at theirs.

**AJB:** Now how did you come up, did you decide to do that on the spot or was that something you thought of just now?

**CS:** Spur of the moment.

**Agent Jeffrey Rinik:** Winging it, were you winging it. Is that...

**CS:** I was winging it.

**AJB:** That was pretty good thinking.

**Agent Jeffrey Renik:** Very good.

**AJB:** OK, so now you're, you've done your rouse.

**CS:** And I knock on their door. She didn't answer the door. She opened up the window. She, she opened the window, she opened up the curtain and looked out.

**AJR:** OK.

**AJB:** Who is she? Who...

**CS:** The mother.

**CS:** And she, I told her we have a water leak problem. I need to check inside the bathroom to see if the water was coming through. She didn't wanna let me in. I tried explaining to her that we had a water leak upstairs and that we're getting water in other rooms and if the water was in there the sheet rock would be ruined and we'd have to move 'em out of the room. And she still didn't wanna open the door, so I said, "OK, no problem ma'am I'll just ah, go get the manager and ah, and we'll check it then." And she asked me "well why do you have to move me out of the room?" I said, "Well not if we can find out that there's no problem with the leak in the bathroom." And after I said I'll go get the manager, then she agreed to let me in. And so I went in.

**AJB:** OK. You go in. She opens the door? Do you hear the locks being undone?

**CS:** I, I don't recall.



**RIGHT** Cary's federal public defender John Balatz told the media that his client's mood was "fine" during the intensive California trial at which he pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity

checked out and forgotten to return the key. But Carole's husband and father she would have contacted them and filed a Missing Person report in Maricopa County before driving to the lodge to try and find the girls.

When a plastic wallet insert containing Carole's ID and credit cards turned up on the highway 85 miles away, the dozens of FBI agents, local officers and volunteer searchers started looking elsewhere for answers. Had the party been carjacked? Had they veered off the road on their way out? One piece of evidence presented the idea that something more sinister might be afoot: when police reviewed the evidence they had, including a collection of the belongings of the missing women, they discovered that someone had unsuccessfully attempted to use a missing credit card belonging to Carole in Modesto. Police questioned staff members at the lodge looking closely at an employee seen changing the locks on the cabin the day the women went missing. The employee had a criminal history and his brother was a registered sex offender. But he passed a polygraph test. Another employee of Cedar Lodge became a suspect having failed his polygraph but there was insufficient evidence to tie him to the murders. Cary was also questioned but remained off police radar due to the fact that he had no previous criminal convictions and remained calm throughout their questioning. The strongest suspects of all were violent convicts Eugene Dykes and Mick Larwick from Modesto, who had been arrested shortly after the women disappeared for unrelated offences. When Lawrick sung like a canary about how he had murdered the women and dumped their bodies off road, the police felt confident they had found the truth, when in fact they were a million miles away from it.

## CLOSURE

A month after the three women vanished, police were called to a burnt out car found concealed in a downhill embankment out of sight from the usual walker's route. The license plate caught the attention of the passer by who recognised it from the missing posters that had been put up around the site of the park. Inside the boot police found two charred bodies. Dental records confirmed the identity of the first body, Carole Sund, while Silvina Pelosso's identification was verified through a mixture of dental and DNA records. But where was Juli, they asked?

Five days later the answer to the question that preyed on their mind the most was delivered in an envelope addressed to the Modesto FBI offices. A crude map showed the location of the missing girl, the page, ripped from a spiral notebook read "We had fun with this one." Who was "we" the police asked? Eugene and Dykes? While forensics evaluated the map and envelope for DNA, cadaver dogs were deployed to the circled location. Beneath a thick layer of foliage, they found Juli's semi-decapitated body. The FBI was satisfied that they had the killers safely behind bars, charges were being filed and finally everyone felt safe again. But on 22 July, another body was found in the brush.

26 year-old Joie Armstrong was a naturalist at the nearby Yosemite Institute. The day before her body was found, she had been at her cabin packing, getting ready to visit friends in Sausalito, but when she failed to show up, her friends knew there was something wrong and asked the National park



## “ CARY WAS QUESTIONED BUT REMAINED OFF POLICE RADAR DUE TO THE FACT THAT HE HAD NO PREVIOUS CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS ”

Authorities to do a welfare check on their friend. Outside her home was her partially packed Toyota truck. The hum of music escaped through the open front door of Armstrong's cabin: a sound that made the hairs on the back of the officer stand on end. They found her body in a drainage ditch in the trees not far from her home. She had put up a valiant struggle for her life but this had evidently angered her attacker more: she had been decapitated and dumped in the stream. The grotesque sight of her vulnerability was further enhanced by the fact that she had obviously been sexually assaulted.

Two sets of tyre marks near the body showed that a vehicle with two separate tyre types had been down the road and two sets of footprints in the muck showed signs of a struggle. Several witnesses came forward to tell police of a light blue utility vehicle, an International Scout, that they had seen in the area the day Armstrong was taken. The same vehicle had been spotted in the area of El Portal, so police followed the trail of clues until they came to a clearing in the park. Sat in front of his light blue Scout, Cary was basking in the sun naked and smoking marijuana near the river's edge.

The officers searched a calm Cary's truck and then asked if they could search his backpack: he was hesitant but eventually allowed them to look. Cary denied having been in the area of Armstrong's home, despite several witnesses claiming to have seen his truck, but again he was not considered a suspect until photographs of his tyres proved to be identical to the ones found near the decapitated body later that day. Back in Yosemite Park the police discovered Armstrong's head just metres from her body. The police returned to question Cary further the next day only to find he hadn't turned up to work. The FBI tracked him down to a nudist colony restaurant at the Laguna Del Sol, where, once





**ABOVE** The murders shook the otherwise peaceful community, and added a sense of paranoia to what is recognised as one of the most beautiful parts of the US. Flowers were left where the burnt out car was found, where locals mourned

confronted, a fully clothed Cary stood up and put his hands behind his head. Asked if he would like to be questioned at the resort or at the station, Cary chose the station.

Once seated and comfortable, Cary began to talk. "I'm a bad person. I've done bad things," he told Jeffrey Rinek, a now retired FBI officer. "Sometimes I think of world peace and see the beauty in things, other times I feel like I could kill everyone." Then he said something that stopped Rinek in his tracks: "I can also give you closure on the other three." Before Cary went into detail about his murder spree he asked interviewing officers John Boles and Rinek if he could strike a deal in return for his confession. He wanted to be placed in a prison close to his family, the reward money from the missing family to go to his parents and for a 'good sized stack' of child pornography. The officers refused to bargain with Cary, they told him that his confession would allow him to repent for the evil things he had done. It was clear that Cary's inner turmoil was seeping through the cracks, but he gave a full confession to Joie's murder, telling police how using his abduction kit, (duct tape, a knife and a gun) he had bundled the girl into his van after striking up a conversation with her about Bigfoot. She had flung herself out of his moving vehicle in a bid to escape but when he caught her, it was clear she wasn't going to go quietly, which was why he lost his temper and decapitated her. When asked about the abduction kit, Cary said he had it on him at all times to be ready in case an opportunity presented itself. "It was something I was looking forward to," he said. He also told officers about Carole, Juli and Silvina and how he had sent the map to the FBI, paying a small child \$5 to spit in a cup, before using the collected sample to seal the envelope and throw detectives off. As the gruesome details of the murders came flooding out, police knew they had their man and charged him with murder.

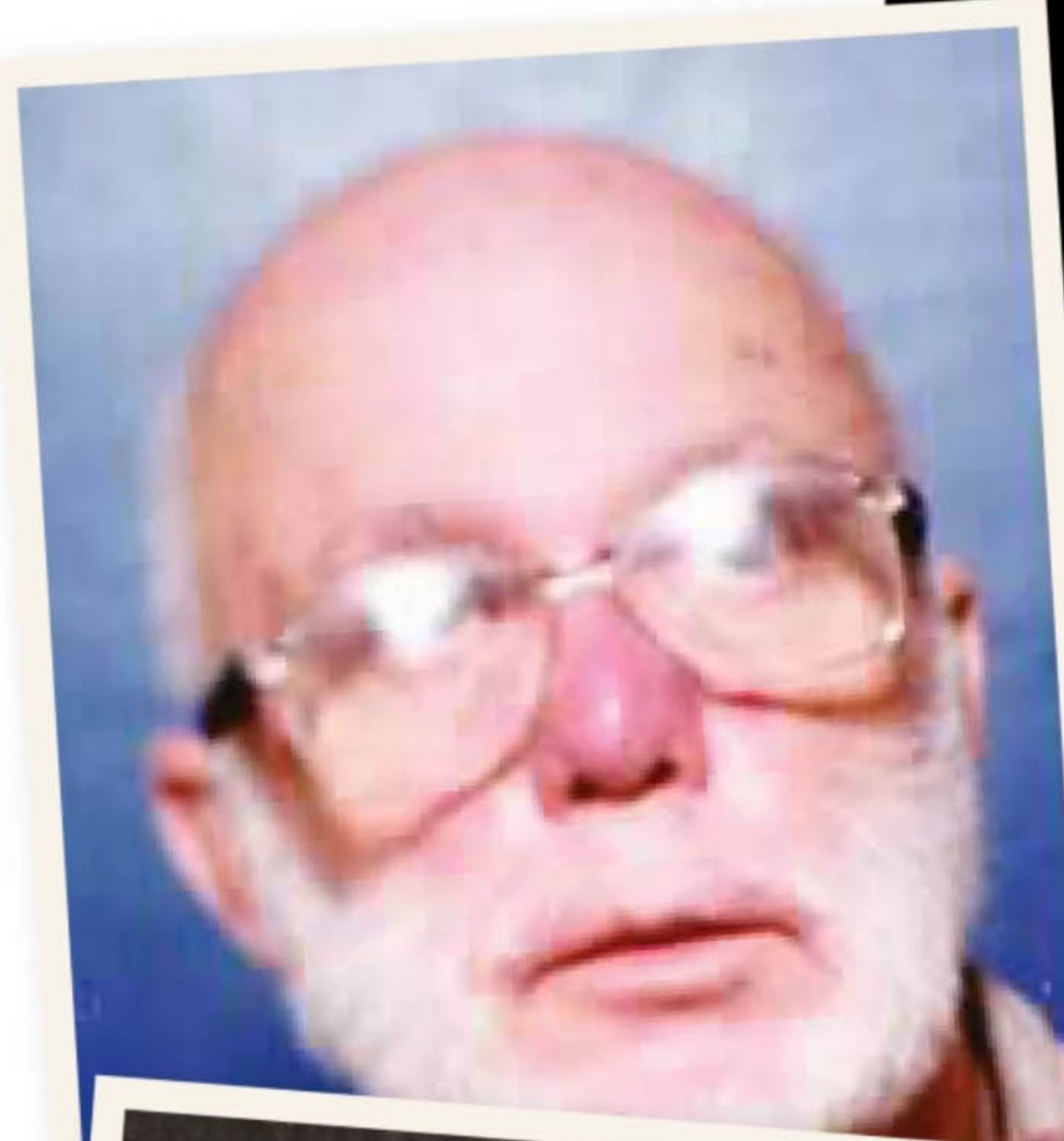
Cary pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity, drawing upon the voices he heard and the disturbing thoughts that had plagued him for decades. But a jury found him both sane and guilty of first-degree murder. Sentenced to death, Cary currently resides in San Quentin prison and awaits execution.

## A PAEDOPHILE'S LEGACY

THEIR CRIMES LINKED BY THE STAYNER BROTHERS' BLOOD TIE, PAEDOPHILE KENNETH PARNELL WASN'T ALL THAT DIFFERENT FROM CARY IN HIS VIOLENT SEXUAL FANTASIES

Parnell's first conviction for child molestation was in 1952. Parnell received a sentence of four years in prison for impersonating a police officer and sodomising a young boy. But while receiving treatment at the Norwalk State Hospital he escaped and remained on the run until the following year. Author Mike Echols claimed that the rapist was sexually molested himself at the age of 13, although Parnell denied having ever been abused. Prior to Steven's abduction, Parnell was sentenced for an armed robbery in Utah. Kidnapping Steven and Timothy was his worst crime, for which he only received a five-year prison sentence. After being released from prison, he suffered

a stroke, but even his ill health didn't prevent his predilections. In 2004 he was convicted of trying to purchase a child and attempted molestation, after offering his caregiver \$500 to buy a four-year-old boy with a 'clean rectum' for him. Parnell was sentenced to 25 years to life under the "three strikes law". He died in prison in 2008 from natural causes.



After Parnell's trial for kidnapping Steve, which saw the predator put behind bars, the family tried to resume as normal but tragedy seemed to follow them everywhere



INTERVIEW

# “IT SENT A SHIVER DOWN MY SPINE”

WHEN HANDYMAN CARY STAYNER ASKED TO SPEAK TO JEFF RINEK ALONE, GUT INSTINCT TOLD THE FBI VETERAN THAT HE WAS NO FLEEING WITNESS — STAYNER WAS THE YOSEMITE PARK KILLER HIMSELF

WORDS BEN BIGGS

We had fun with  
this one

Vista Point

120

Don Pedro



As a part of the field office in Sacramento, Jeff Rinek worked on some of the highest profile criminal cases in the US, including the Unabomber Ted Kaczynski, killer cult leader Ulysses Roberson and the sadistic torture-murders of Robert Rhoades. Ironically, the former special agent's career-defining moment came on a case that he had effectively been taken off. In 1999 he was called out to bring in a fleeing witness from Yosemite National Park: 'The Yosemite Park killer', as he quickly came to be known, had murdered three women in spring and another in summer that year. As case agent in name only (office politics and personal problems had seen him sidelined), Jeff was at home in Sacramento 225 kilometres away and had little information on the case, before an hour-and-a-half car journey back to the office with 'witness' Cary Stayner most unexpectedly ended with a full confession.

We often think of law enforcement operatives as being hard-boiled by years in the field, a way of protecting themselves from the trauma of the horrors they witness, like an oyster forming a pearl. Jeff's methods flew in the face of this tradition – he bonded with suspects and kept in touch with families of their victims long after the case closed. This took its toll on his mental health, but it's also earned him a reputation as a compassionate investigator with a supernatural ability to elicit confessions.

## BIO | JEFF RINEK

Jeff Rinek devoted three decades of service to law enforcement, retiring as a special agent in the FBI's Sacramento office, California, in 2006. He has formed his own interview technique, almost an antithesis to the long-established (and controversial) Reid technique. His latest book, *In The Name Of The Children*, is on sale now.





**You must have had conflicting emotions when Joie Armstrong's body was discovered, because you were already convinced that the men who had been arrested for the Yosemite murders weren't responsible.**

Yep. I started out being the case agent for this. As the case was in national, even international prominence, some of the people in the FBI who are very career-oriented became more involved in it, and I was slowly edged out. One of the frustrating things to me about the investigation was that people don't just kill other people for the sake of killing others... more often than not, there's a sexual motive.

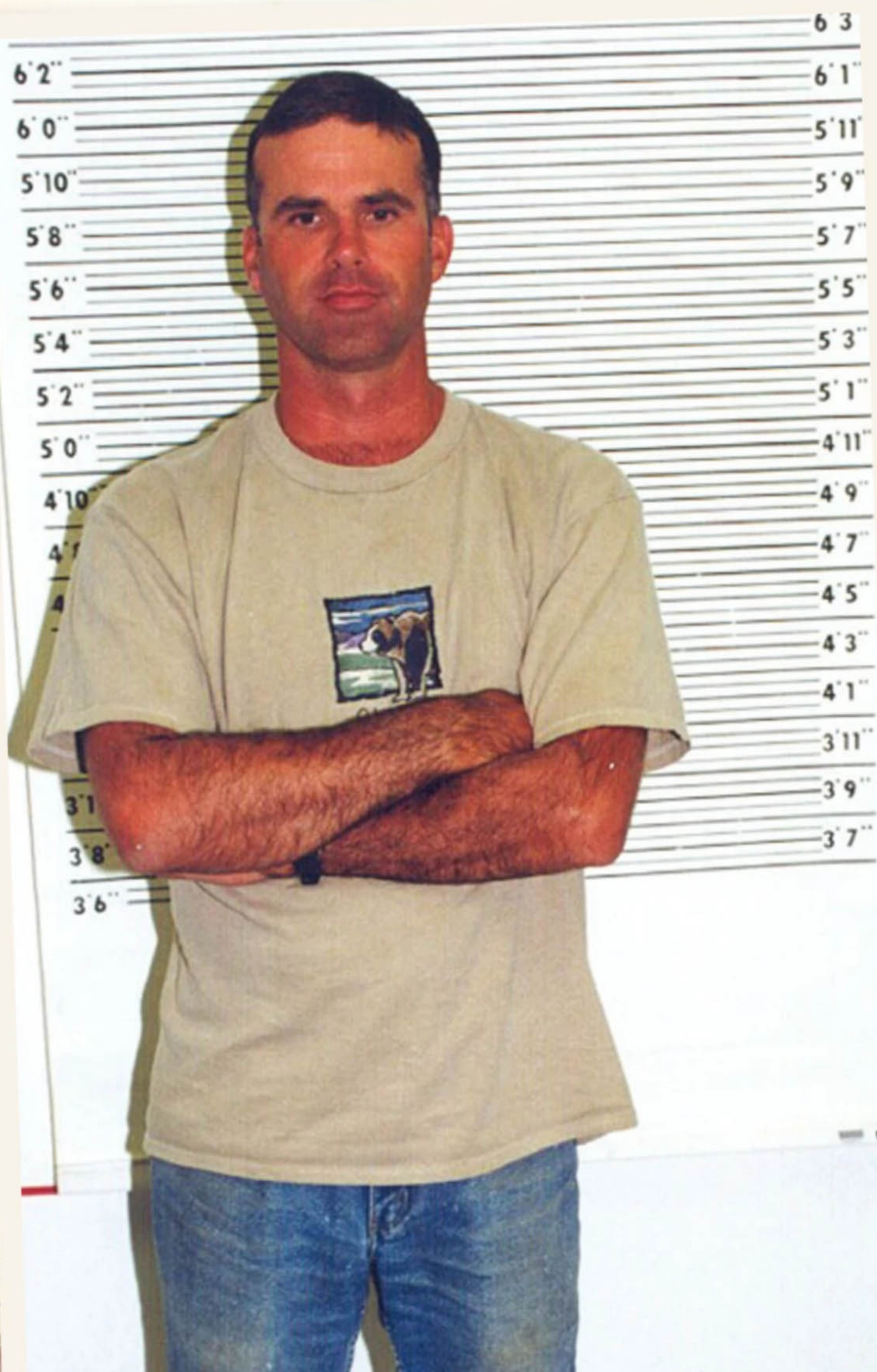
For these three women and then for Joie to have gone missing – I just felt that we were limiting ourselves. It was very, very frustrating to me that the whole task force was focused on these two guys who had been locked up, and they were immediately indicating that they were the ones.

Then when Joie went missing, the information about her disappearance and about what had happened was very much kept to command post at Yosemite. Those of us outside the command post weren't aware of the facts of what had happened. When I met Cary Stayner I knew virtually nothing about Joie's disappearance and death. Even up until now, some of the only information I have about that comes from Cary Stayner himself.

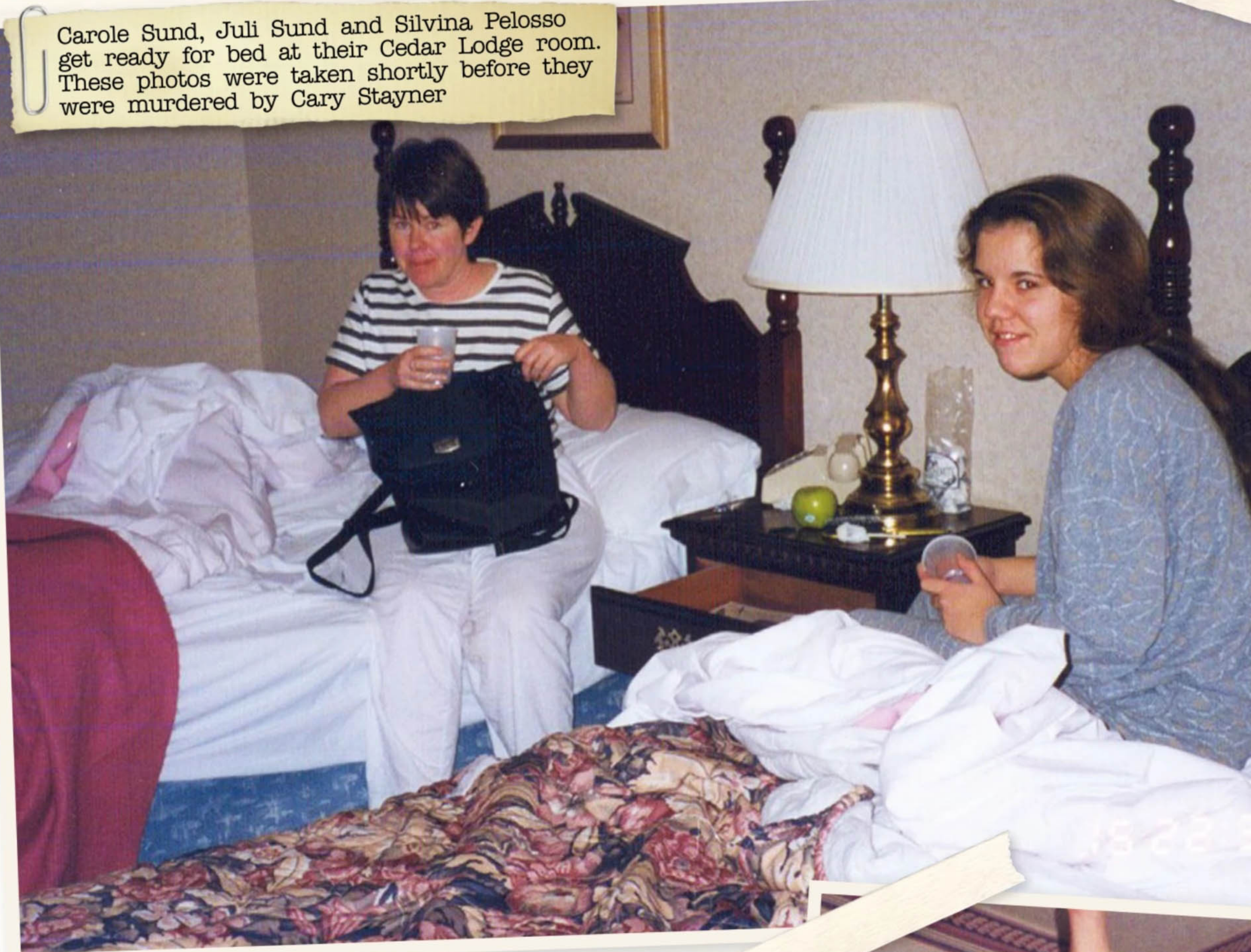
**It sounds like Stayner was more or less off your radar by the time you went to pick him up.**

Yeah, I had been removed from the case several months before. I was actually back in Sacramento, addressing my other caseload. We'd had an event in the family: my wife is a fish and wildlife biologist and we'd always had a lot of animals in the house. At the beginning of the spring, a bunch of our dogs had got out and were hit by a car. So I stopped going to Modesto because I wanted to be with my family while they were going through this difficult time. I was aware of what was going on in the case and was frustrated that

**BELOW** A photo of Cary Stayner taken prior to his arrest. Stayner was a Cedar Lodge handyman and had initially been ruled out as a suspect



Carole Sund, Juli Sund and Silvina Pelosso get ready for bed at their Cedar Lodge room. These photos were taken shortly before they were murdered by Cary Stayner



**“ I HEARD THEM TALKING ABOUT CARY STAYNER AS A WITNESS, BUT, MORE IMPORTANTLY TO ME, I KNEW WHO HIS BROTHER WAS ”**

they were just looking at these two guys. Every time I heard something on the news about it, it would just frustrate me more. I was not... addressing it.

When Joie Armstrong disappeared I was attending a conference with another FBI agent, Chris Hopkins, who was the head of our evidence response team. When he left to attend to the case, I knew nothing. I stopped by the office on the way home and I heard them talking about Cary Stayner as a witness, but, more importantly to me, I knew who his brother was [kidnapping victim Steven Stayner - see boxout]. But that was all I really knew when this thing started.

**So you took him in, and out of the blue he forgoes the polygraph test and asks to speak to you alone. In that moment, how did you feel?**

I have been very lucky and successful in getting confessions. As the book tries to demonstrate, I don't try to hide myself from people... I am myself. I'm just the way I am, I try not to judge people. So when we went to get Cary Stayner, I didn't know who he was but we did have a car ride together – that's where we got to know each other. I was not considering him as a suspect, and even when we got back to the FBI office I was briefed by the special agent in charge that he was, in fact, a witness who was fleeing. We all believed that and we treated him as a witness.

When he asked to speak to me alone, it reminded me of many other times when people have said, “I want to skip the polygraph test and talk to Jeff.” Initially that means there's a reason they don't want to take the polygraph. Sometimes that reason doesn't always reflect that they're the killer.



**RIGHT** Silvina and Carole were found in their burnt-out rental vehicle and identified by their dental records. Juli was found shortly afterwards after a sinister note pointed investigators to a location at nearby Vista Point



# BIRTH OF THE YOSEMITE PARK KILLER

A SIGNIFICANT FAMILY EVENT IN CARY STAYNER'S CHILDHOOD COULD HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE MONSTER HE EVENTUALLY BECAME

In 1972, when Cary was just 11 years old, his little brother Steven Stayner was kidnapped by a convicted paedophile. Kenneth Parnell picked Steven up on his way back from school in Merced, California. After a week holding Steven against his will and molesting him, Parnell told Steven that his parents couldn't afford to keep him anymore and that Parnell had been granted custody. Nearly eight years passed before Steven plucked up the courage to run away with another young boy Parnell had kidnapped and report Parnell to the police.

The time following Steven's reunion with his family still wasn't entirely happy. His Mormon father refused him counselling for the years of abuse he had endured, despite Steven blaming himself for his abduction. He later began to drink heavily and then, one fateful autumn evening in 1989, Steven was riding his motorcycle without a licence or a helmet, when he collided with a car and was killed.

Cary Stayner likely never got over his brother's kidnapping, or death. He attempted suicide in 1991. Then, in February 1999, three tourists staying at the Cedar Lodge motel, just outside the Highway 140 Arch Rock entrance to Yosemite Park, were murdered. Carole Sund and Silvina Pelosso were found in the boot of the burnt-out shell of their rented car by a hunter, while Carole's teenage daughter Juli Sund was found using a crudely drawn map drawn on notepaper, anonymously sent to police, showing the location of her corpse. At the top of the note, a sinister message convinced many that there was more than one perpetrator involved: "We had fun with this one."

On the back of this evidence, two suspects were arrested and charged with the three murders. But those leading the FBI investigation had tunnel vision: they were sure that robbery was the primary motive in this case and that they had their men. Jeff, far from satisfied, was vindicated when the headless body of a young naturalist, Joie Armstrong, was found not far from the cabin in which she had been staying.

While he says that life experiences can contribute to the making of a serial killer, Jeff Rinek doesn't like to give extra weight to individual events in Stayner's history, and that by the time Stayner reached adulthood, it might already have been too late: "I don't know if therapy could have helped him," he told us, "or served to take this train off the tracks."

So Cary said he wanted to speak to me alone, yes – it was a shock, and I'd like to say I knew exactly what to do, but I didn't. I went out to speak to my partner Ken Hittmeier and asked if he had any instructions or guidance he wanted me to carry out. It wasn't until Stayner indicated to me that he had something to do with Joie Armstrong that I started to think of him as an actual murder suspect.

**Do you think the fact that the car ride took longer than anticipated, you had time to chat with him and that you were treating him as a witness, encouraged Stayner into a confession?**

When you say "encouraged him into a confession" – I don't think I could say that, because I didn't know there was a confession to come from him. In the car ride, all I really knew about him was what had happened to his brother. Since I worked so many of those cases with people who had been abducted, and their families are then faced with us, doing our job, it was important to me as an investigator to know how his family felt they were treated by law

enforcement. As he was describing this to me, I was very anxious to know, what could we do better? How could we be better so that when we respond to missing children, the families are more comforted by us?

In the course of discussing this in regards to his brother, we had some very deep and emotional conversation. He described to me how much it hurt him and his family that the offender who took his brother only got seven years. His brother was held for seven years and the offender was put in jail for seven years – how is that right?

They felt that when his brother came

Carole's torched Pontiac Grand Prix was found at a remote dump site that only locals knew about. When the case was finally closed, Jeff Rinek had this car crushed, along with other evidence that could have ended up on the ghoulish murderabilia market



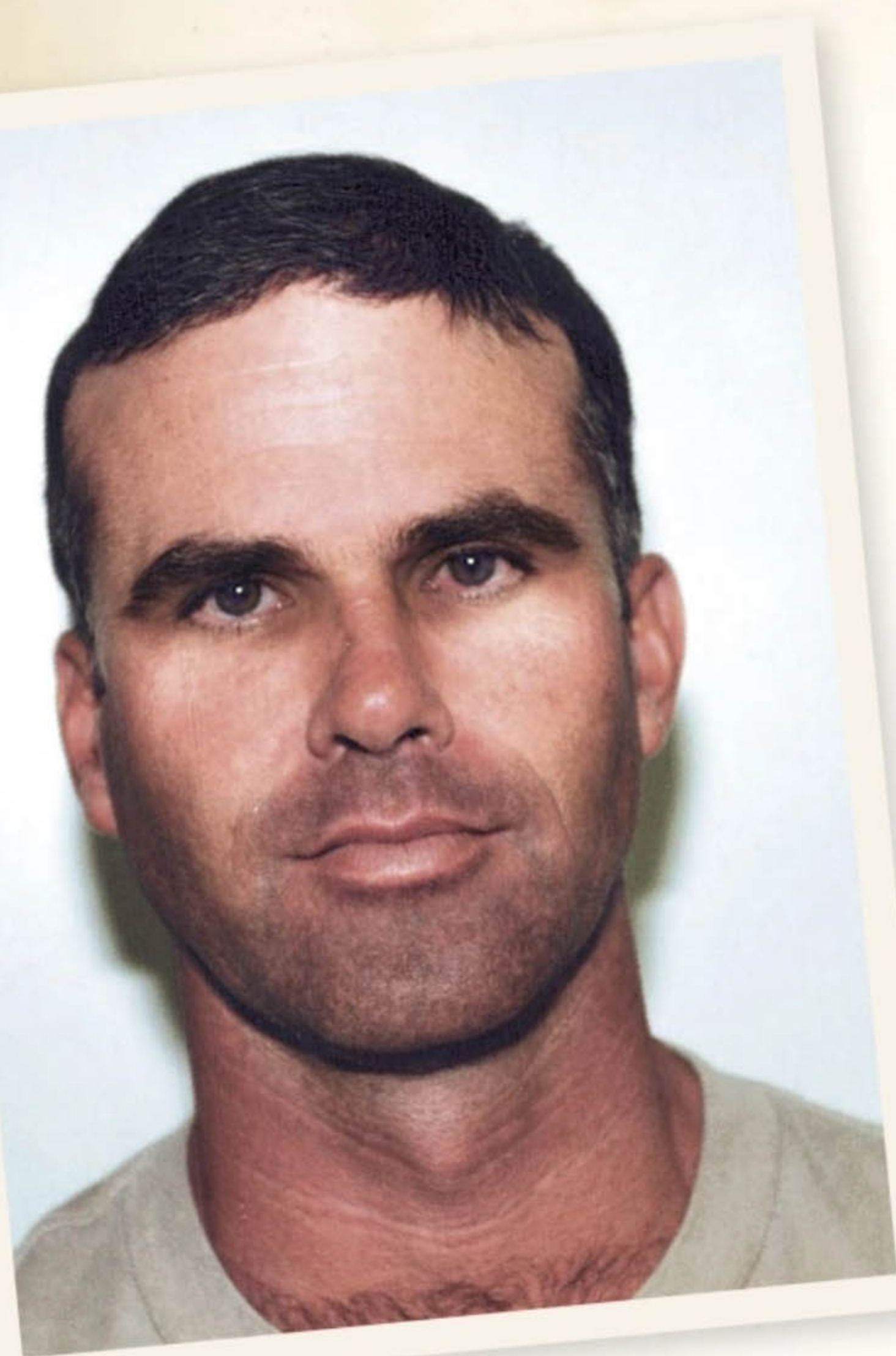
**MISSING**

JULIE SUND  
CAROLE SUND  
SILVINA PELOSSO

1999 PONTIAC GRAND PRIX  
CALIFORNIA LICENSE 4BMV025

ANYONE WITH INFORMATION SHOULD CALL  
THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
AT 1 800 435-7883  
TOLL FREE





**ABOVE** Cary Stayner was originally picked up as a witness, but after talking to Jeff Rinek during the 90-minute drive to the office, he eventually confessed to being the Yosemite Park Killer

**BELOW-INSET** Stayner's International Scout, spotted near Joie's cabin around the time she disappeared, was an uncommon vehicle with an unusual paint job, and was easily identified

home, it wasn't a life happily ever after. He had behaviours that were no longer accepted in the family, he was living a riskful life, and eventually contributed to his own death by driving a motorcycle recklessly.

I would have to say that, in that car ride, the discussion we had was about what I tried to do as law enforcement to try and help these people. And I also extended to him and his family at the time, to try and get them counselling to deal with his brother if they weren't feeling that things had worked so far. I think that meant something to him.

So I think that was more... not like I was coaxing a confession from him, it was more like he felt he could talk to me and not feel like I was judging him, and understanding the emotional impact that goes on.

**So, almost inadvertently, you formed a bond with him?**

Exactly. I love establishing bonds with people, whether they're criminals or not. I love to meet people, I enjoy people, I think that everyone has something to offer... If you meet a homeless person on the street, that person knows a lot more than me about how to live on the street. They can teach me, tell me about it... everyone has something of value, and that's how I treat people.

**Your interview method almost sounds like the opposite of the Reid technique: you come from a position of not knowing anything and you're quite humble. Would you say that's true?**

Yes, I'd agree with that. When I wrote this book, it didn't start out as a book. It was something to leave behind for my wife and children at their request. Then it got attention from literary agents and I was paired up with Marilee, my co-writer. Marilee realised that what I was actually doing was a

**“MY WIFE DESCRIBES MY CAREER AS ‘SUFFERING’ A SUCCESSFUL CAREER, BECAUSE IT’S IMPOSSIBLE TO... NOT BE AFFECTED”**

technique. For me, it's not a technique because it's who I am and what I do. But I do know that people who have watched me do interviews have changed their own technique and have become much more successful with their interviews.

When you're interviewing someone about committing a crime, they're scared and they also feel pretty valueless. But if you can explain to them that they do have something to offer, that they can help others, that it can make a difference in how they help themselves. My wife describes my career as “suffering” a successful career, because it's impossible to share these things from these people and not be affected, to not have feelings about what you hear.

**You quote Nietzsche (“When you stare into the abyss...”) right at the start of the book. I'd imagine your experiences with the worst of humanity can have a deep effect on you.**

It can. It's not in the book, but I had an experience... all these interviews that I've done, all the confessions have taken such a toll on me that I was not physically or emotionally healthy.

We responded to this case where a 15-year-old boy had been drowned, and we went with local police officers and met this other boy who was 19. There was something about

A traffic camera at a highway pullout had captured Stayner on film as he drove Juli Sund to her death





the boy that just hit me. I suggested they bring him back to the station. I got in the car behind the driver and when that 19-year-old got in next to me, he let out this big sigh of relief. I heard it, and I said, "Just tell these guys what happened. It'll be fine, you'll feel better, they'll help you and it'll work out." When we got to the police station, I was leaving when somebody came and got me and said [the 19-year-old] wanted to speak to me. When I do these interviews I like to know about these people, I like to know who they are, what their lives are like and what their happy times were, what their sad times were. In this boy's case, I asked him if he could have anything in the world, what would he want.

Here's a boy who had just brutally drowned a 15-year-old child. And he said he wanted to be loved by someone and wanted someone to love. Now, where did that come from? What does that mean about the person? I'm not a psychiatrist or psychologist, but it means something to me.

**Your approach is unconventional for law enforcement though – it does sound very doctor-patient.**

It's fascinating to me, to understand and learn about people. I think we can learn a lot about ourselves by learning about others. How many times have you watched an entertainer, a politician or actor, and you feel a type of camaraderie with that person because they're expressing something that you feel or believe. I think there's something to be said for that.

When I interview people like this, I usually start out by trying to get their summary of what they've done. Then I try to get an idea, from his point of view, what he observed, what he heard, what he smelled – everything. Then we go back again and I want him to tell me from the victim's point of view. Because how many times do we look at a killer and think, "Oh that's the last thing that the victim saw before they died." He can help us shed light on that. Finally, the third trip is me standing in the room and him describing to me, as an observer, what I'm seeing.

**You'd spent some time interviewing Stayner before you, Stayner and John Boles stopped to eat pizza. The atmosphere must have been odd – you all eating and chatting as if you're just taking a break from a job.**

The way it happened was: we went down to contact Stayner, not to pick him up, and while we were down there we were told

to pick him up. We had literally no idea why we were there or why we were doing it, other than we follow the requests given by the command post. So when we were asked to bring him back to the office for an interview, I did not think it would be me doing the interview.

When we got back to the office we were hungry. We hadn't had breakfast and we had taken him away from breakfast. So I asked the desk to send out for pizza, which they did. So it was just all of us, trying to get through what we were asked to do in as pleasant a manner as possible.

There was no sense of pressure or imminent development. Basically, when he asked to speak to me alone instead of taking the polygraph, that's when the old emotion meter started going up. That's when things became tense, because for the next several minutes sitting with him is when he was trying to describe to me and tell me, without actually telling me, that he had done some very bad things, that he had some things to talk about concerning Joie Armstrong – that he was the one we needed to talk to.

**BELOW** Stayner watched Joie walk to and from her cabin on the other side, from this bridge

**BOTTOM** Stayner revealed that Joie Ruth Armstrong had put up a hell of a fight as he abducted her. She had managed to leap from his vehicle, break into a sprint and had nearly escaped



A footprint found outside Joie's cabin, which was an unmistakable match to the tread on Stayner's sandals

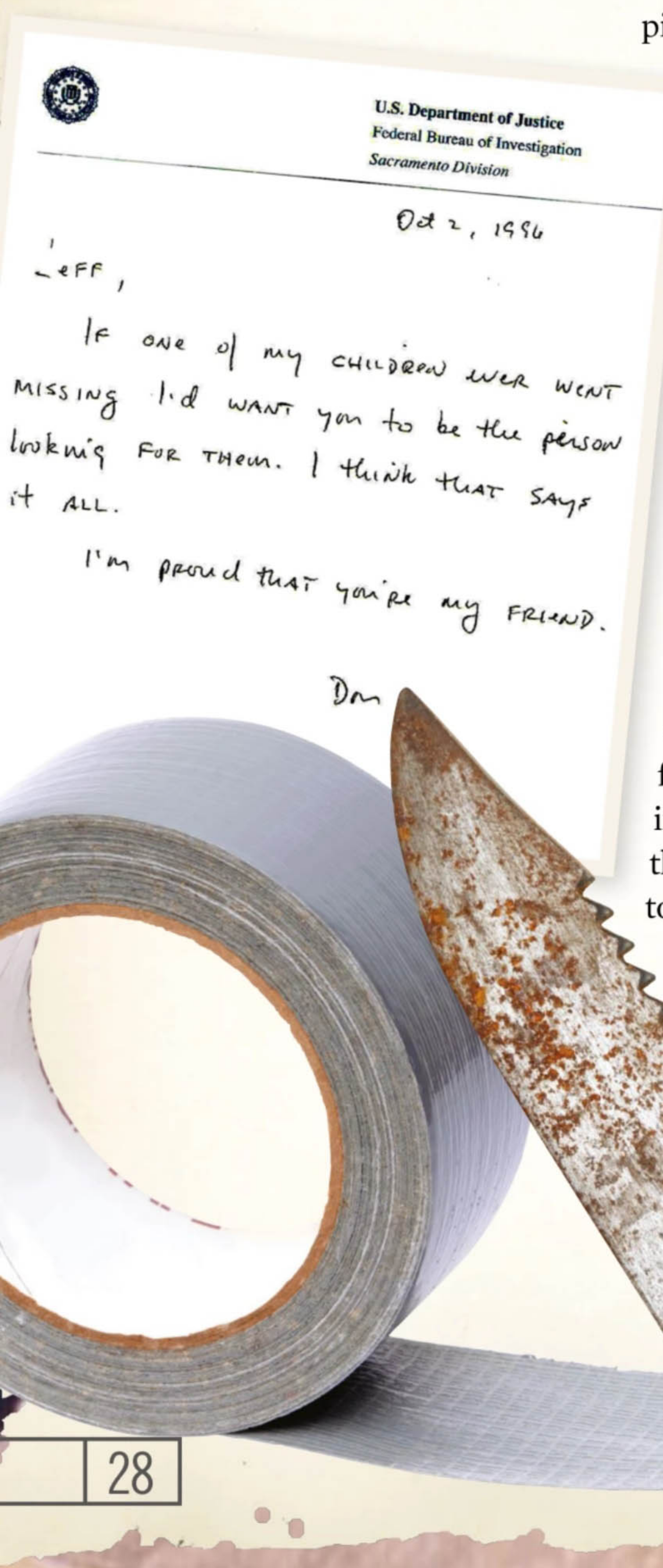






**ABOVE** Following his confession, Jeff Rinek (left) and Cary Stayner returned to Joie Armstrong's cabin, where Stayner recreated the crime on videotape

**BELOW** Don Pierce, Jeff's FBI supervisor early in his career, sent him this touching letter



And you're right, that creates a lot of anxiety and tension... Ken Hittmeier, the acting supervisor, had him moved up to our polygraph room so that we could record audio and video of whatever was going to happen after that. When they moved us up there I thought that we should eat pizza first – people love to break bread, that's how they get to know each other. But I didn't do it deliberately to do that, I guess I was looking for a break in the pressure myself!

My friend John Boles, when he came up carrying the pizza and walked into the room, I invited him to stay because

I like being with other people and I think we work together well with the camaraderie. I can tell you that for the next six hours during that confession, John, Cary Stayner and myself were just three guys, in a room, talking in-depth about what he had done. What he had done is remarkable and it's the reason you're talking to me now, but I tried to focus on what he did and why he did it.

**He sounded enthusiastic when he talked about his killer 'kit'. Do you think that's because he was getting something off his chest, or was this more like someone talking passionately about a hobby?**

When the interview started and he began talking about himself, I believe most if not every sexual offender has a sexual fantasy. So in Cary Stayner's case, we talked first about his sexual fantasy. I knew from experience interviewing others and from the training I've been through... I knew that these guys, once they're committed to a fantasy, they put together a kit. For a rapist, it's a rape kit. For a killer, it's a murder kit. For an abductor, it's an abduction kit, you know. So I asked him if he'd put a kit together to accomplish his fantasy, and he advised that he had done that.

There were some people who were observing the interview who, when I asked whether he put a kit together, thought that there was something wrong with me, that [it was wrong that] I would know



these things. That bothers me today, that they thought that I am that monster.

When we discussed the kit, it wasn't as a hobby, it wasn't the passion of what he was going to do. It was more a kit based on what he thought he would need to carry out his fantasy. We talked about several items – he had duct tape, he had rope, he had a gun. In his case, he had been watching TV shows, the learning channel, and trying to see how law enforcement investigates these cases. He knew not only what he was trying to accomplish, but he knew he'd have a better chance of accomplishing it if he didn't tell the victim what he was there for. So in every instance he told the victim he was just there for money, or for their car, and if they cooperated with him, it would all be over and he would leave. He knew that would cause them to cooperate.

**Do you think he ever believed that himself? Was his intention always to kill?**

In my opinion, his fantasy was composed of two young girls that I would describe as very pubescent, and he realised that they would have a guardian with them. So his fantasy was to kill the guardian from the outset and then to have sexual encounters with both girls together.

**You mention that it was "as if Steven's kidnapper had destroyed the Stayner family three times over". Do you think that if Cary Stayner had sought help, some counselling for his issues, he might not have committed those crimes?**

First of all, I've got to say that I'm not sure that anybody could say that what happened to Steven Stayner was the reason Cary went out and did what he did. I do believe that there was some family dysfunction and I think that contributed to how he was and who he was. In the



# STARING INTO THE ABYSS

IN HIS 30-YEAR CAREER, JEFF HAS DEALT WITH DOZENS OF SEXUAL OFFENDER AND SERIAL KILLER CASES, PORING OVER THE OFFENCES WITH THE PERPETRATORS. SOME OF HIS CAREER HIGHLIGHTS STILL TORTURE HIM TODAY

In his autobiographical book, Jeff's experiences investigating sexual predators are distinguished by individual victims, rather than cases or killers. It's more personal, a more intimate look at the crime, and a more disturbing insight into the criminal's mind.

## FRANKIE PROCTOR

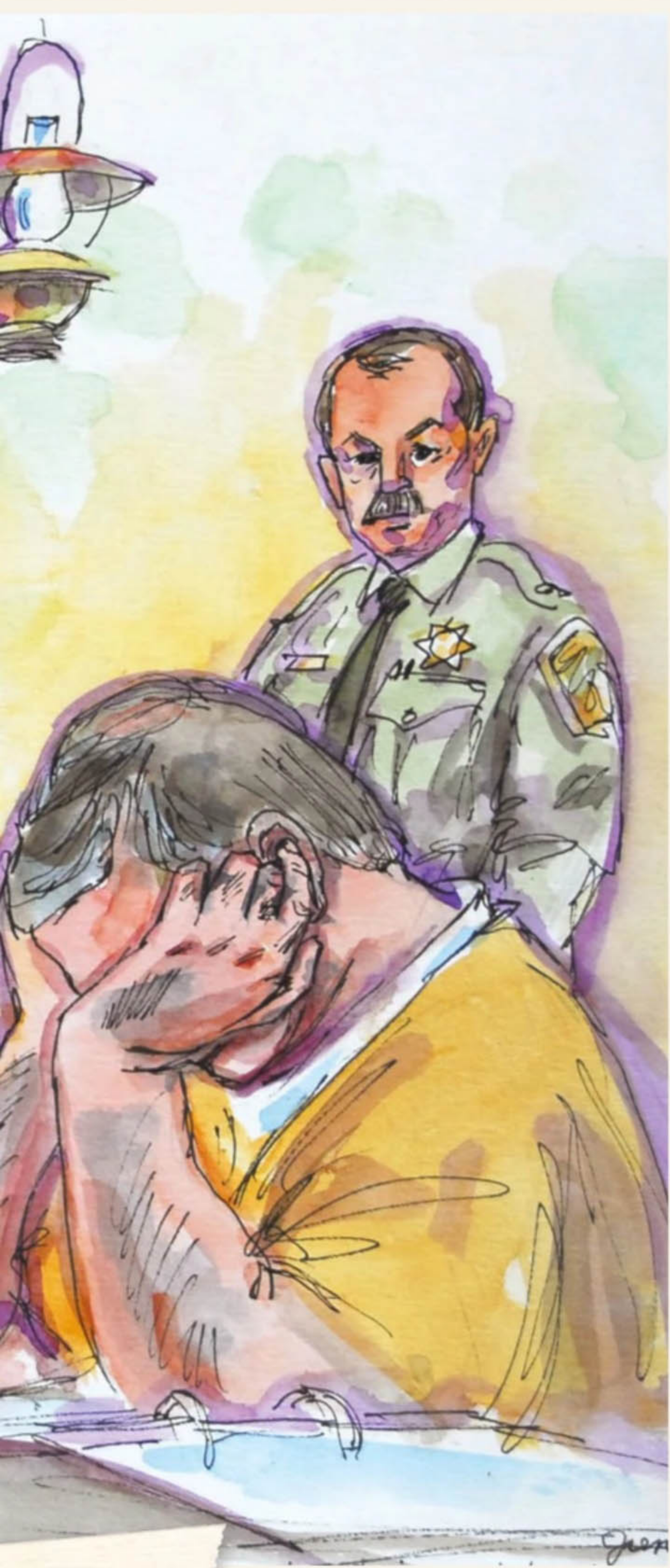
Earlier in Jeff Rinek's FBI career, he was given the case of a seven-month-old baby boy who had been kidnapped at gunpoint. The kidnappers were gang members who'd recently gotten out of prison, and were stealing a baby to order for an 18-year-old woman who wanted a replacement after her miscarriage. Jeff went in at the vanguard of an eight-man SWAT team, and burst into an ordinary family living room with two parents and a young baby on the floor. There followed a surreal scene in which the armed men examined the child to identify it. It's one of the happier results from his career.

## ALEXANDER OLIVE

Alexander was the victim of megalomaniac cult leader Ulysses Roberson, who leveraged a harem of followers and considerable financial resources to get a soft sentence for killing his four-year-old son. Like Roberson's 'wives', Alexander experienced a ritual of physical and mental abuse at his hands, but was picked out for exceptional treatment. The day Alexander died, beaten, naked and alone in a freezing garage, there were eight people in his house who were too intimidated to do anything. His remains have never been found. Roberson got a 15-year sentence on a second-degree murder rap.

## MICHAEL LYONS

Jeff Rinek describes this case as the one that has haunted him most in the last 20 years. Eight year-old Michael disappeared in 1996, on his way back from school in Yuba City, California. He was found not long after, in a bush by a riverside, naked except for a T-shirt, having suffered lengthy torture that ended with his throat being slashed. The violence and evident sadism with which Michael was murdered made even veteran crime scene professionals gasp. "Quite frankly," Jeff Rinek told us, "The case of Michael Lyons – that crime scene depiction that I give in the book – I wake up with that every morning."



LEFT Courtroom artists captured this scene of Stayner sobbing at a preliminary hearing

## “JOHN, CARY STAYNER AND MYSELF WERE JUST THREE GUYS, IN A ROOM, TALKING”

confession, Cary advised that he had been molested by an uncle. I think that had a profound effect on him. His family were very strict Mormons and I think the restriction of the religion might have imposed some hardship on him when he was growing up. So I think you have to look at it as if it's a combination of everything, and although it's tempting to try and point at this one thing as having more of a weight, I think that's a dangerous road to go down. I think you have to look at the total life experience.

Another thing: after Cary confessed, I went down the next morning to prepare his family for what was coming. During that time his father made several admissions to me about what he had done. I chose not to memorialise them because these people were losing their second son and I did not want to add to the family's burden by putting out there for the world the problems that family had been experiencing. The FBI is not happy with me about that, but I felt that we do this job to try and help people and to try not to hurt people in the course of helping them. Sometimes that can't be helped but it bothers me. It travels with me when we work these cases and in the end we've disrupted or caused harm to other people. I try to be as empathetic as I can. When I do these things I feel so bad for these people, it's so hard to see people suffer.

There's a book called *About Conscience* by Dr. Robert Hare. It contains his theories about psychopaths, people he believes are incapable of emotion. My way of interviewing, the way I approach people, I have no ability to affect a psychopath. I think in those interviews where I'm able to

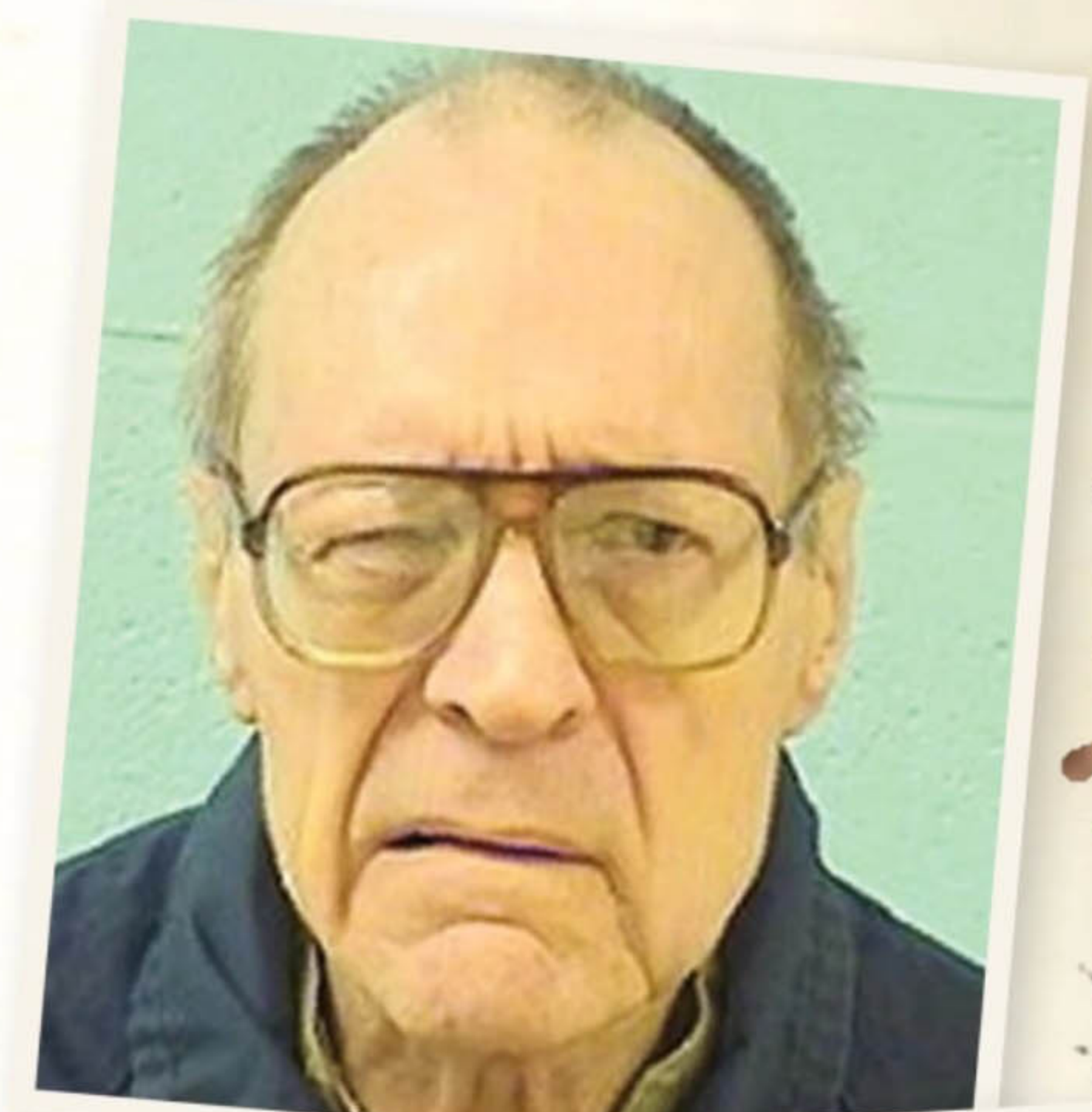
make a difference, I do believe that those people are not all the way on the extreme end of psychopaths, I do believe that they're capable of emotion.

**You talk quite a bit about keeping in touch with the families of the victims. Do you think that's as much about closure for you as it is for the families?**

Absolutely. It is about closure for me, it's about closure for my family as well. I don't live in a vacuum, my family experiences my reactions to these cases and different people get different benefits from doing these cases. For me, the benefit that I get is the ability to try and help someone else, help them get on with their life and to be part of their life that has value and meaning to them.

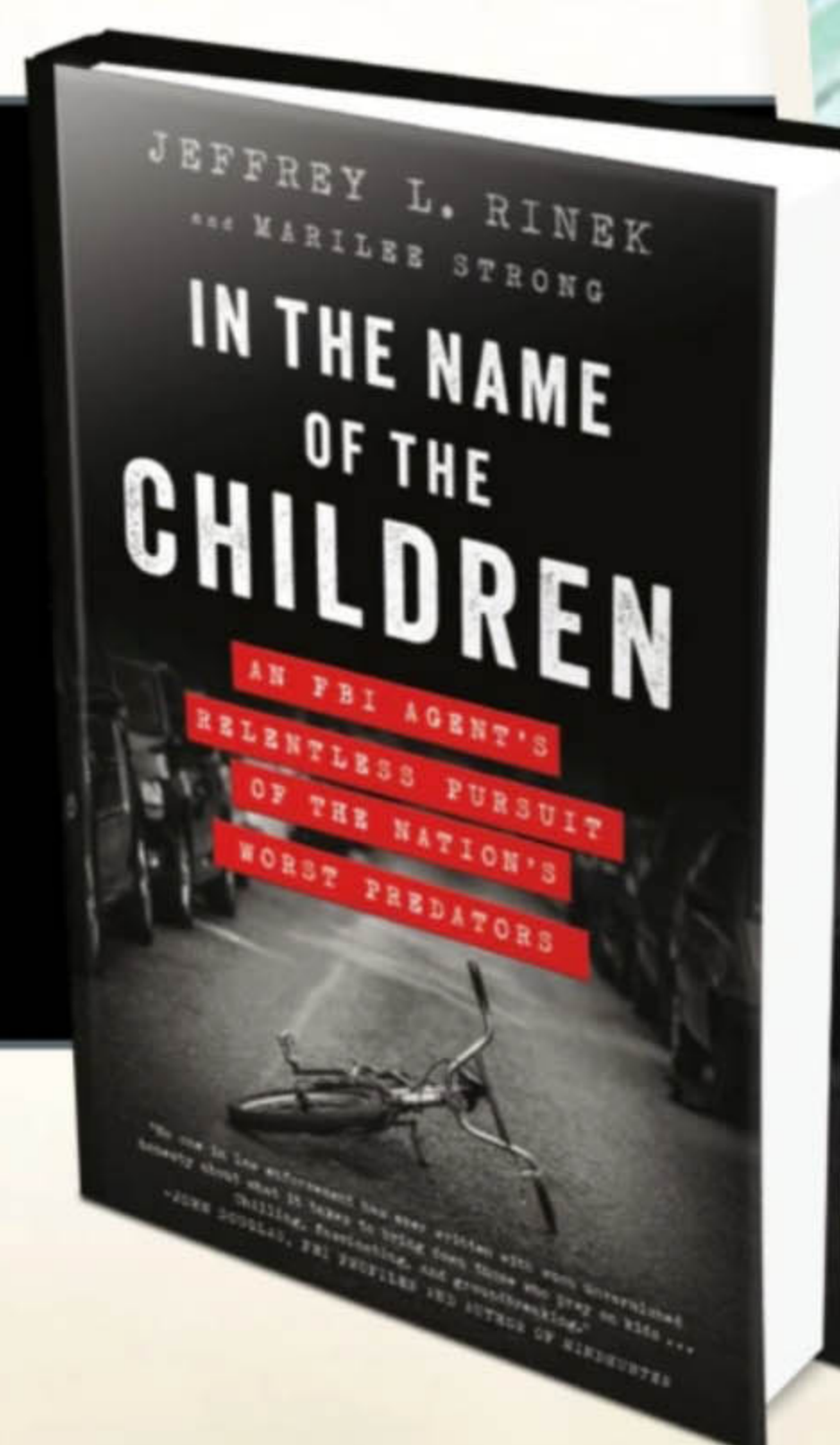
I know it sounds altruistic... but I'll give you an example. It's not in the book, but I was involved in a homicide case in which I was summoned to California's death row by a serial killer who revealed to me locations of unrecovered victims. As these victims were recovered and I got to meet the victims' families, I met one mother of a victim who, when I met her, her health was bad, her teeth were falling out, her hair was falling out. She was trying to get herself committed to a mental facility when myself and others were able to help her, and help her deal with the loss of her daughter and the injustices she felt. Now she's got a life: she looks great, she's healthy, she's got a boyfriend and she's happy. To see her and to see the effect that had on her, it's extremely rewarding and something you take home with you every time.

**BELOW** DNA tied Robert Ben Rhoades to the murder of Michael Lyons, though he was convicted of murdering 14-year-old Regina Kay Walters. He took the photo below just before he killed her

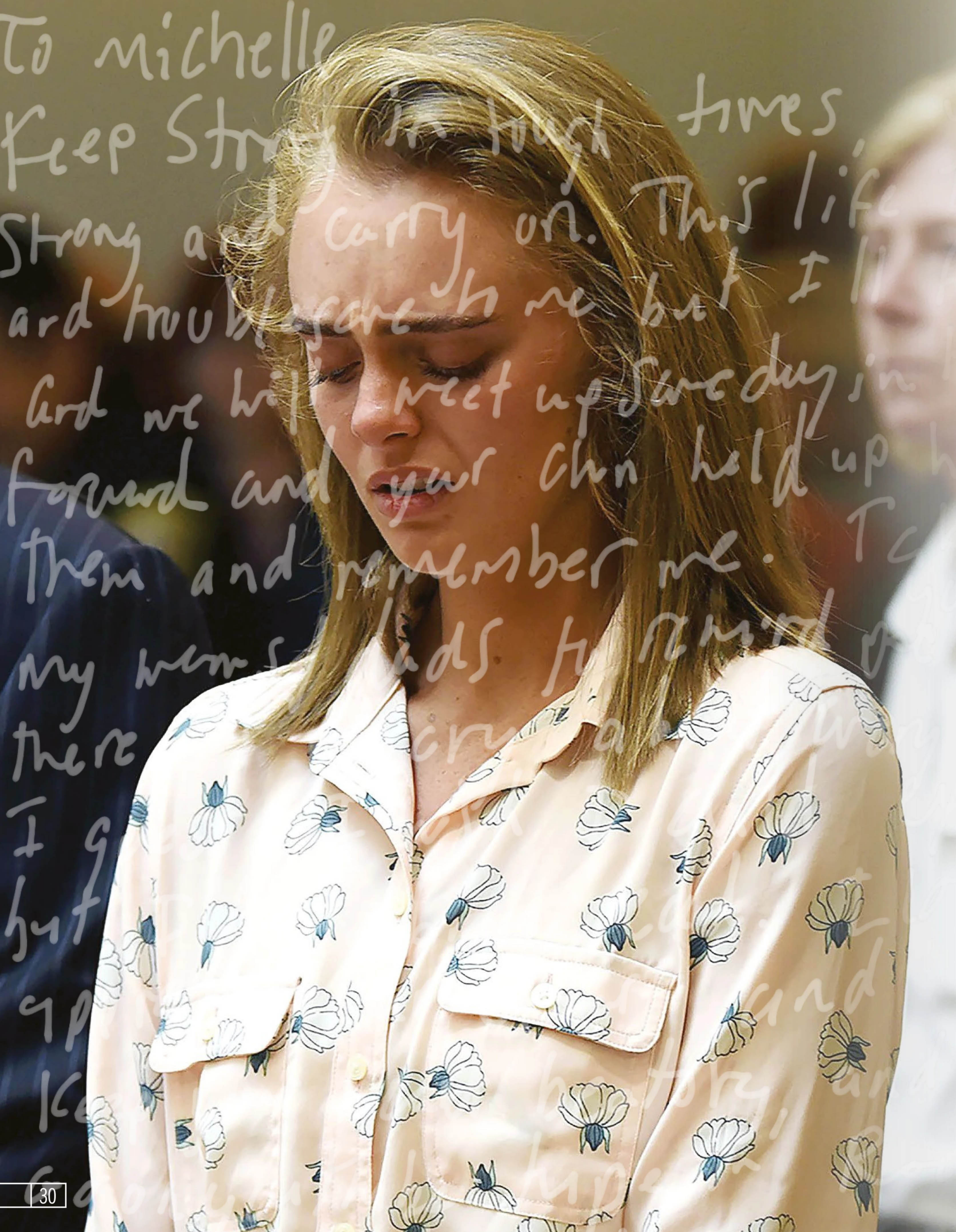


## IN THE NAME OF THE CHILDREN

*In The Name Of The Children: An FBI Agent's Relentless Pursuit Of The Nation's Worst Predators*, is available now from BenBella Books.











# “YOU JUST NEED TO **DO IT** CONRAD”

‘STICKS AND STONES MAY BREAK MY BONES...’ BUT IN THE  
LANDMARK TRIAL OF TEXTING TEEN KILLER MICHELLE CARTER,  
WE LEARNED THAT WORDS CAN DEFINITELY HURT YOU

WORDS TANITA MATTHEWS

**M**ichelle Carter’s trial was one of the most controversial of 2017. The sweet-looking 20-year-old Massachusetts defendant stood accused of the involuntary manslaughter of her boyfriend, Conrad Roy III, who in 2014 committed suicide by shutting himself inside his black Ford pickup truck and inhaling a lethal amount of carbon monoxide. He was 18 years old.

Carter had been in a neighbouring county when the incident occurred. But when police investigated Conrad’s death they found thousands of messages between the two. The correspondence showed that Carter had at one stage attempted to prevent a suicidal Conrad from taking his own life, but almost at the flick of a switch she began to advocate his mission. Between the pair of them they planned Conrad’s death. Carter walked Conrad through every step leading up to his final breaths.

When the deadly gas began to take effect, Conrad rushed out of the vehicle and called Carter to say he couldn’t kill himself after all. Carter told Conrad to “get back in” the truck. Conrad was found dead the following day. Prosecutors argued that Carter had wanted to play “the grieving girlfriend” and had thrived off the attention that followed Conrad’s suicide. But a small camp of people feel that as immoral as her actions were, she had acted under the fiercely protected amendment of free speech and therefore should not be deemed criminally responsible for Conrad’s decision to take his own life. The trial and sentencing was not only as

sensational as it sounds, but the verdict broke new ground regarding the responsibility the law attributes to texting.

## “JUST DO IT”

Since her arrest in 2015, evidence against Carter had been mounting. The following year in February, a Bristol County grand jury had sought to indict her as a youthful offender for the involuntary manslaughter of her boyfriend. Being indicted as a youthful offender as opposed to a juvenile meant that if Carter was found guilty, she would face up to 20 years behind bars. Carter decided at the beginning of her trial to waive her right to a jury. Instead she chose to have her case heard only by the judge, Lawrence Moniz, who would ultimately decide her fate based on the evidence given.

As opening arguments got underway inside a Bristol juvenile court on 5 June, 2017, prosecutors Katie Rayburn and Maryclare Flynn, along with defence attorney Joseph Cataldo, built a picture of the events leading up to Conrad’s suicide. In a digital age where relationships are formed at the touch of a button, Carter and Conrad’s relationship began ‘the old fashioned way’.

The pair had met each other in 2012 while on vacations with their parents in Florida. Conrad was a marine salvage captain from Mattapoisett. He loved baseball and was particularly close to his mother. Carter was a schoolgirl from Norfolk County who liked *Glee*. But back at home, 30 miles





## “ THEIR CONVERSATIONS CHANGED. CARTER IMploRED CONRAD TO KILL HIMSELF ”

apart, their relationship was held together, predominantly through text messages and social media.

At King Philip Regional High School in Wrentham, Carter was voted a ‘class clown’ and the person ‘most likely to brighten your day’, and although pictures from social media portray her as a bubbly and vivacious young woman, Carter often expressed how she felt isolated from girls in her school. She told Conrad how she struggled with social anxiety and an eating disorder and, like many a young teenage girl, feared she was not well liked enough. Prosecutors said that with school coming to an end for the summer Carter craved attention from her peers. “She used Conrad as a pawn in her sick game of life and death,” Flynn accused.

Conrad was not without his own demons, though, and Cataldo sought to show that to the judge. When Conrad was 16 his parents, Lynn Conrad and Conrad Roy Junior, separated. A child in the middle of a broken family unit, Conrad’s mental health suffered. At the age of 17 he attempted to commit suicide by overdosing on Tylenol (paracetamol). A female friend raised the alarm and Conrad survived. It was recommended that he receive counselling for his anxiety and depression, which he consented to. His mother was the first witness to be called to the stand, and she testified how her son had willingly taken prescribed medication in a bid to get better and turn his life around.

But by June 2014 Conrad’s thoughts had strayed back towards death, a feeling that he expressed to Carter, who

Carter texted Conrad’s sister asking if she knew where her brother was, knowing he had just killed himself

at first seemed eager to help. “I’m trying to dig you out,” an exasperated Carter text Conrad one evening. But he simply replied, “I don’t want to be dug out.” He told her, “I want to die.” Conrad had already shared with Carter his previous attempts to take his own life and had told her the next time he did it he “would not fail”. Weeks passed and Carter encouraged Conrad to seek help. She told him he was a “beautiful person” and suggested that they go together to receive help for their anxiety. But each time Conrad rebuffed her advances and resolved the conversation by insisting that nothing Carter could do or say would change his mind. “I can’t get better, I already made my decision,” Conrad told her.

In July the tone of their conversations changed. Carter now repeatedly implored Conrad to kill himself, insisting he would be better off dead. But what gave Conrad reason to hesitate was the thought of his grieving family. “Everyone will be sad for a while but they will get over it and move on,” Carter assured him. She explained to the troubled youth that she would be there to support his family through the aftermath of his suicide. “They know how sad you are, and they know that you are doing this to be happy and I think they will understand and accept it. They will always carry you in their hearts.”

The pair discussed all the ways in which Conrad could end his life. Conrad researched a variety of methods himself,



## FRIEND OR FOE?

THE COURT WAS SHOWN THESE TEXT MESSAGES, BUT EXACTLY WHAT CARTER’S INTENTIONS WERE WAS A TOUGH CALL

23 JUNE 2014

**CARTER:** How do you want to harm yourself

**CONRAD:** Something idkk yet

**CARTER:** Please don't

**CONRAD:** I hate myself I'll always hate myself, I'm never gonna view myself as good I'm so far behind

7 JULY

**CONRAD:** If you were in my position. honestly what would you do

**CARTER:** I would get help. That's just me tho. When I have a serious problem like that, my first instinct is to get help because I know I can't do it on my own

**CONRAD:** Well it's too late I already gave up.

12 JULY

**CARTER:** So I guess you aren't gonna do it then, all that for nothing

**CARTER:** I'm just confused like you were so ready and determined

**CONRAD:** I am gonna eventually

**CONRAD:** I really don't know what I'm waiting for. . but I have everything lined up

**CARTER:** No, you're not, Conrad. Last night was it. You keep pushing it off and you say you'll do it but u never do. Its always gonna be that way if u don't take action

**CARTER:** You're just making it harder on yourself by pushing it off, you just have to do it

12 JULY

**CARTER:** You just need to do it Conrad or I'm gonna get you help

**CARTER:** You can't keep doing this everyday

**CONRAD:** Okay I'm gonna do it today

**CARTER:** Do you promise

**CONRAD:** I promise babe

**CONRAD:** I have to now

**CARTER:** Like right now?

**CONRAD:** where do I go? :(

**CARTER:** And u can't break a promise. And just go in a quiet parking lot or something.

## CONRAD ROY III COMMITS SUICIDE ON 13 JULY

21 JULY

**CARTER:** I read this thing online about trying to agree with the person and that would make them change their mind because they see how stupid they're being. But it didn't work for you and I did it for too long. You probably thought I was okay with it and You talked about being in heaven and being my angel and at the time I went along with it because i knew you weren't gonna do anything. But you fucking did it and I'm so sorry I didn't save you.

### “GET BACK IN”

On July 12, 2014, after days of discussing how and when Conrad would kill himself, the pair exchanged what would be their final words – words that would come back to haunt Carter when police realised she had been “in his ear” until the very end. Rayburn called the Fairhaven policeman who had found Conrad’s body to the stand as a witness. Asking him to direct his answers to the judge, she questioned him on his 13 July search for Conrad after his mother reported him missing. The detective explained how Conrad’s mother had been concerned that her son had not come home the previous evening and how police scoured the area for his truck, which they found in the car park of a K-Mart in

**ABOVE LEFT** Taking the stand to testify during the trial, Conrad’s mother, Lynn, explained that her son had been self-medicating with marijuana in the months leading up to his death

**ABOVE** Michelle Carter was treated at McLean Hospital. It’s possible that her own condition had a bearing on her fatal interaction with Conrad





Fairhaven, just as the pair had planned. When police found Conrad he was a “cherry red” colour due to the carbon monoxide poisoning.

Meanwhile, in Plainville, Carter began to dedicate her time to ‘raising awareness’ on suicide and described herself on social media as a suicide prevention advocate whose mission was to “save as many lives as possible”, knowing that she had done so little to save Conrad’s. Following his death, she regularly texted Conrad’s phone, including the night he had killed himself. After ringing multiple times with no answer she wrote, “I’m scared are you okay? I love you please answer.” She knew he would not respond. Police found this and more than 80 other messages on Conrad’s phone.

In some of the texts Carter expressed how she was struggling with her body image and mental health. She called Conrad her “angel”. Two months after his death, and a day after what would have been Conrad’s 19th birthday, she organised a softball charity game in his honour at the Plainville Athletic League. But when Conrad’s best friend attempted to relocate the event to his hometown, Carter grew upset and accused him of trying to “steal” her idea. School friend Alexandra ‘Lexi’ Elba testified that Carter had texted her in the run up to the charity event: “I put the Homers for Conrad on Facebook! I’m like famous now haha. Check it out!”

## “ NOT ONCE DID CARTER TELL ANYONE SHE HAD BEEN ON THE PHONE WITH CONRAD AS HE SLIPPED AWAY ”

Homers for Conrad raised almost \$2,500. Carter texted Conrad to tell him that she would be donating the money to the National Alliance for Mental Illness. But 14 September, the day after the charity event, was the last time she texted his phone. Meanwhile, police were gathering evidence on Conrad’s suicide, investigating the circumstances that had led a teen – who only hours before he disappeared had been walking with his mother and sisters along a beach and going out for ice cream – to take his own life.

Conrad’s mother described on the stand how she had come across her son’s notebook after he died and found a number of suicide notes inside, written to her, her ex husband and to Carter. Lynn had never seen Carter and Conrad together and was completely unaware of their relationship. But Carter, as well as texting her deceased beau, had begun to text his mother, too.

Telling her to “be strong” for his sisters, Carter expressed how she had done everything she could to save him. “It’s my fault,” she told her. However, not once did she tell anyone

**ABOVE** The victim’s sister said that in the days after her brother’s death, Carter had asked her if she could have some of her brother’s ashes, despite having only met him a handful of times

**RIGHT** Conrad’s suicide note was introduced in court as evidence. Was he determined to die or had he been manipulated into thinking death was the only way out?



Carter wept in court as the verdict was handed down. The judge found her guilty of involuntary manslaughter after identifying her "wanton and reckless behaviour"



that she had been on the phone with Conrad as he slipped away. When Carter asked for the suicide letter, Conrad's mother put her off while the police conducted their investigations. She had no idea at this time that Carter had not only asked her son to write her a letter – she had also demanded that his final 'shoutout' on social media be to her.

### "I LISTENED TO HIM DIE"

With Carter's words being used against her in a court of law, her defence attorney was faced with the task of proving that while what Carter had said was deemed morally unforgivable, it did not warrant criminal proceedings against her. Cataldo argued that Conrad's actions showed that he was determined to kill himself with or without Carter's help. Google searches on his laptop the day he committed suicide included "committing suicide to be happy" as well as a plethora of disturbing online research over the past few months.

Cataldo also argued that the young woman, struggling with her own issues, was "overwhelmed" by Conrad's issues and showed that she had spoken to her psychiatrist about

To Michelle

Keep Strong in tough times, you taught me how  
Strong and carry on. This life has been too chaotic  
and troublesome to me but I'll forever be in your  
And we will meet up someday in Heaven. Put your  
forward and your chin held up high. Our songs,  
them and remember me. Take anything from  
my mom/dads to remind you of me.  
there, I'm sorry about everything. I am not  
I guess. I wish I could express any gratitude  
but I feel brain dead. I love you and  
appreciate ur effort and kindness towards  
Keep your heart beating, and keep pushing  
Go on you take hope in Rocky Balboa  
let the light guide you.  
I love you.





how she was concerned for her boyfriend, who only had her to turn to. The young woman had also been prescribed the anti-depressant Celexa. Psychiatrist Dr Peter Breggin testified that the drugs Carter was taking for her anxiety were likely to leave her feeling “involuntarily intoxicated” and that between late June and mid-July they could have contributed to her irresponsible thinking regarding Conrad’s death. Dr Breggin explained how the drugs target the brain’s frontal lobe, which controls empathy and decision-making. Speaking about Carter’s actions following Conrad’s death, Dr Breggin told the court that Carter had been “enmeshed in a delusional system” due to her medication.

Cataldo argued that his client had thought that by pushing Conrad to carry out his fatal plan, she would ultimately be saving him when he came to realise the grave error he was making. But Rayburn’s argument was strengthened by a phone call that was made from Conrad’s phone to Carter – lasting 42 minutes – on the night that he died. Unlike the texts, it was hard to decipher what kind of final, verbal correspondence the pair had.

The most telling evidence of what had happened came in the form of more phone messages. In a text to her school friend Samantha Boardman on the night Conrad died, Carter wrote, “I heard moaning like someone was in pain and he wouldn’t answer when I said his name. I stayed on the phone for like 20 mins and that’s all I heard.” She followed up with

**ABOVE** “The phones that we have now allow you to be virtually present with somebody,” said prosecutor Katie Rayburn, adding that Carter told Conrad to “get back in the car even though she knew he was going to die”

## “THE VICTIM WOULD HAVE BEEN COUGHING WITHIN TWO MINUTES AND WOULD HAVE LAPSED INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS AFTER 13 MINUTES”

another text the next night asking her friend if they could “do something tonight to get my mind off it”.

Dr Faryl Sandler, a state medical examiner, described to the court the natural progression of someone who is exposed to carbon monoxide. According to Sandler, the victim would have been coughing within two minutes and would have lapsed into unconsciousness after 13 minutes. A person typically dies after 20 minutes of exposure, he explained. While Conrad lay dead and alone in his truck, Carter had been texting her friends: “I’m not wearing a bra” and “I think my friend just committed suicide”, as opposed to calling for

help. But Cataldo persisted that neither had Conrad called for help from the emergency services. Instead he

had chosen to call his girlfriend for support.

Perhaps the biggest insight into that 42-minute phone call came from the defendant herself, who had texted her friend Sam Boardman in September as she struggled to cope. “Sam, his death is my fault, like honestly I could have stopped him. I was on the phone with him and he got out of the truck because it was working, and he got scared, and I fucking told him to get back in Sam, because I knew he would do it all over again the next day and I couldn’t have him live the way he was living anymore. I couldn’t do it, I wouldn’t let him.”

Another school friend, Olivia Mosologo, said Carter texted that she “heard him die” and was “talking on the phone with him when he killed himself”. In other messages she said



Carter didn't tell anyone that she already knew about Conrad's death until a few months after, when she told a friend that she had been on the phone with him as he “cried out in pain”

that she was “the only one he told things to” and that she “should've gotten more help”.

In closing arguments, Rayburn told the judge that Carter had “created the harm” when she “told him to get back in the car” and that she knew that Conrad did not really want to die, that he was scared and that if he got back in the truck he would die. Drawing on Carter's text message to Boardman, she highlighted to the judge how Carter had “sat on the phone after telling an 18-year-old boy to get back in the car to kill himself, after he didn't want to, and she listened to him cry on the phone. She listened to his last words. She listened to his last breaths. And she listened to him die on the phone. All the while she could have easily called for help and she didn't.” Rayburn asked that the judge find her guilty.

However, Cataldo told the judge, “This is not a homicide. Michelle Carter did not kill Conrad Roy. It's sad, it's tragic, but it's just not a homicide, and when Conrad sent Michelle a text he said, ‘I don't want anyone to feel guilty about it there's nothing they could do’. He didn't want anyone to feel guilty about it your honour – it was his choice.”

Cataldo also pointed out that the prosecution's job was to prove that Carter's actions were that of a killing as opposed to a person taking their own life, that the proof had to be “proof not by probable cause, not by clear and convincing evidence, but proof beyond a reasonable doubt” that Carter caused the death by her reckless conduct. Cataldo argued that the evidence showed Conrad was suicidal and caused his own death by his own thought process and well-documented intentions. Once both parties had delivered their closing arguments, it was time for the judge to consider his verdict.

## “IT WAS MY FAULT”

On 16 June, Judge Moniz delivered a guilty verdict, advising that sentencing would be held on 3 August. Many fear the decision to find Carter guilty potentially opens up other avenues of how, in this technological era, the person behind a phone screen can be guilty of almost anything without having actually been at the scene of the crime.

Following the verdict, Lynn Conrad spoke of the girl now held responsible for her son's death. “I don't believe she has a conscience,” she told CBS's *48 Hours* show. The victim's father said that the family was happy with the verdict.

**Real Crime** reached out to Lynn Conrad and her attorneys but they offered no comment on the trial. Carter's attorney would only say that they were “disappointed with the verdict” and declined to offer any more information. The District Attorney's office also refused to offer any comment.

Conrad's family had asked the judge to impose the maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. Conrad's aunt Kim Bozzi told the judge “20 years may seem extreme but it is still 20 more than Conrad will ever have.” However, Carter's father begged for mercy and asked that she be granted a probationary sentence instead, telling the judge that his daughter will never forget what she did to Conrad.

On 3 August 2017, Carter was sentenced to 2.5 years behind bars, 15 months of which was a mandatory sentence. Judge Moniz, who also handed down a five-year probation term to Carter, said, “I have not found that Miss Carter's age or level of maturity or even her mental illness had any significant impact on her actions. She was mindful of the actions for which she now stands convicted.” She began her sentence on 11 February 2019 and was denied a parole hearing the following 20 September. She was finally released early from prison on 23 January 2020, for good behaviour.



MINUTE **BY** MINUTE

# FRANCE'S ENEMY NO.1 EXPLOSIVE JAIL BREAK

ONE OF EUROPE'S MOST DANGEROUS AND BRILLIANT DESPERADOS, RÉDOINE FAÏD BLASTED HIS WAY OUT OF A HIGH-SECURITY PRISON AND INTO THE UPPER ECHELONS OF CRIMINAL INFAMY IN APRIL 2013, IN A DRAMATIC JAILBREAK WORTHY OF A HOLLYWOOD BLOCKBUSTER

WORDS BEN BIGGS

**“W**hen you attack an armoured van, it's the best of the best. It's a beautiful robbery.” Convicted armed robber Rédoine Faïd was on the offensive again, but instead of rolling security vans stuffed with cash or sticking up high-end jewellery stores, this time he was charming his way around French TV stations and media outlets. He was promoting his new autobiography *Braqueur: des cités au grand banditisme* (*Robber: from housing estates to organised crime*), with the kind of passion he had applied to his former criminal career. After serving ten years of a 32-year jail term for raiding an armoured van in 1997, Faïd was paroled and strode out of prison, palms held high. “Can you swear that you'll never go back to your old ways?” one chat show host asked him in late 2010. “I'm not here to apologise for being a bandit,” Faïd replied, not quite answering the question, “but I've never suggested to anyone that it's a good thing to do... what I know is that my demons are not sleeping and that they're definitely dead.”

Intelligent, debonair and photogenic, Faïd could have been a foil to Bond in an Ian Fleming novel, his life story the product of an imaginative Hollywood screenplay. And

that's partly because the French-Algerian robber was, by his own admission, inspired by the criminal characters played by Robert De Niro and Al Pacino in his favourite film Michael Mann's *Heat*, which he described as “like a user's guide for armed robbery”. He had the brains to conceive of his chosen criminal lifestyle, the guts to pull it off and the charm to court publicity – which he lapped up.

He also had the opportunity to give up his life of crime and pursue a career in the film industry. “Boredom is the enemy of going straight,” he told the media. “These new possibilities are helping me to start a new life.” But apparently the allure of his old life was too much to resist; at the time of his newfound celebrity status, police were already investigating a 2 million Euro raid on a security van in which he had been implicated. He was also the suspected mastermind behind a botched raid in May that year that had claimed the life of a young police woman. He was arrested once again in 2011 and given eight years in Sequedin prison, Lille, in northern France. But for Faïd, this was simply another opportunity to turn his incarceration into real-world re-enactment of the adrenaline-fuelled movies he had grown up with.

**“ DEBONAIR AND PHOTOGENIC, FAÏD COULD HAVE BEEN A FOIL TO BOND IN AN IAN FLEMING NOVEL, HIS LIFE STORY THE PRODUCT OF AN IMAGINATIVE HOLLYWOOD SCREENPLAY ”**

2011-2013

12.00

Rédoine Faïd makes his preparations for an escape from prison that even he considers a high risk. Using his network of criminal contacts, he arranges for an ‘escape kit’ to be delivered to him inside his cell. This includes a mobile phone, a gun and several packs of plastic explosives. He stashes it in a shoulder bag in the ventilation shaft next to his cell's toilet.



**12 APRIL 2013****19.00**

It's the evening before the day he's going to put his plan into action, and Faïd makes his first and only call on his smuggled mobile phone. Forensics later say that this was to his accomplice outside the prison. Presumably, Faïd was giving them a green light.

**13 APRIL 2013****08.00**

It's Saturday morning in Maison d'arrêt de Sequedin and a cleaner is up on the third floor of building B of the prison, ostensibly going about his daily duties. Security cameras record him flattening his back and one ear to the door of cell 345 and pausing there for a minute, as if listening for something – or to someone. It's Rédoine Faïd's cell.

**08.03**

Just a few minutes later, Faïd exits his cell. Today, he's got a visitor – his brother. He's carrying a red laundry bag as he makes his way down the corridor. It doesn't just contain his laundry.

**08.04**

A short distance through the prison and out of sight of guards, Faïd hands something to another inmate – it's the mobile phone. This is a prized piece of contraband among prisoners and probably more valuable than the gun or the dynamite in his bag, but for Faïd, its usefulness has now run its course.

**08.10**

Faïd passes through several security gates on his way from his cell block to the waiting room. There are 18 people for visitation that day.





**RIGHT** ERIS, France's regional police special forces, move in following the escape

**08.12**

Having entered a security checkpoint with a scanner, Faïd has gone as far as he can. He pulls out the pistol he has hidden in his laundry bag and grabs a guard, then shoots a bullet into the wall. There's nothing like the sharp report of a gun to get everyone's attention and show people you mean business.

**08.15**

He releases the first guard and takes another three hostage, frogmarching them through several gates and into the family waiting room with a gun pointed at their backs, maintaining his threats all the way.

**08.18**

Here, Faïd faces the first of several armoured doors. Sending the guards to one end of the room, he ties his gun to his hand with a shoelace so that he has two hands free. He retrieves one of the charges from his bag and sets it to the door.

**08.21**

He orders the guards out of the room and they only too gladly evacuate with him. Seconds later, a huge blast rocks the empty room. The door is no match for Faïd's powerful explosives.

**08.23**

Faïd picks up another hostage along the way and moves out into the courtyard where he's confronted by another locked gate, which no one can open. Once again, an explosive charge makes short work of this barrier.



# “I WANTED TO MOVE UP IN THE WORLD”

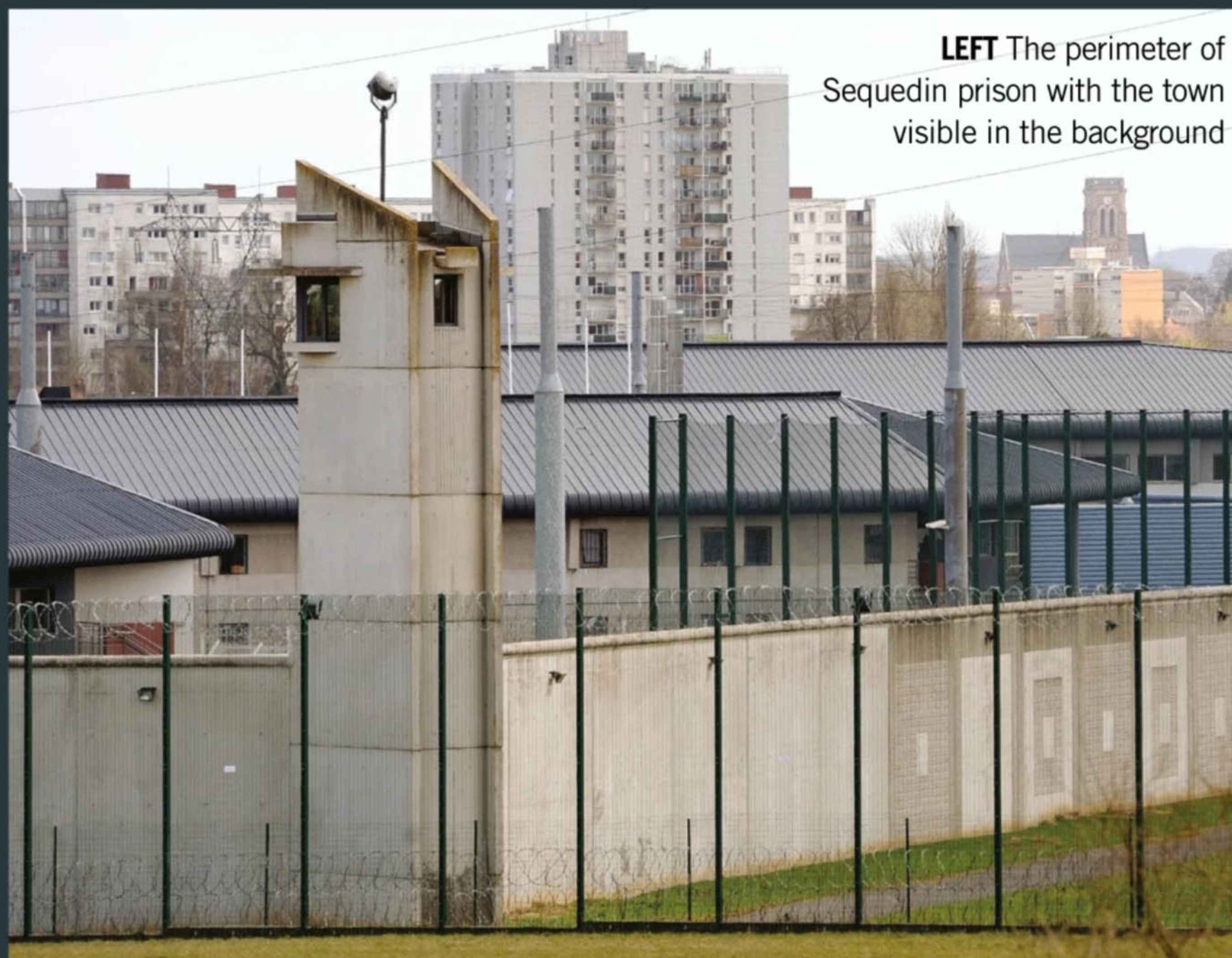
FROM DAY ONE, FAÏD WAS DEVELOPING HIS CRIMINAL TALENTS WITH STREET SMARTS AND THE HELP OF A ROSTER OF CLASSIC CRIME MOVIES

Born in the Parisian suburb of Creil in 1972, Faïd was thrust into an underprivileged community on a background of petty crime. “People don’t care about you when you grow up in a rough area,” he explained to a chat show host in 2010. “Police have a special way of locating you – when they see you in your gang wearing a tracksuit and a pair of trainers, eating a sandwich or playing football... at 23 or 24 I got to the stage where I was perfectly capable of arming myself, walking into a bank and robbing it. So when I wanted to rob an armoured van, I already had a solid experience of robbery. Being quite ambitious I wanted to move up in my world.”

Faïd became intoxicated by the popular crime films of his generation from an early age, then *Heat* saw worldwide release in 1995; the careful choreographing of gun fights between armed robbers and police, and the explicit details of professional robberies were said to have inspired numerous crimes worldwide. This included those of the up-and-coming career gangster Faïd, who embarked on a spree of successful armoured truck robberies until his capture in 1997.



**RIGHT** Faïd had the media, the whole of France and even possibly himself fooled



**LEFT** The perimeter of Sequedin prison with the town visible in the background



Faïd met Michael Mann, director of *Heat*, and told him that 50 per cent of his crimes were only made possible by studying his movie

**08.25**

Finally, Faïd is at the main entrance and just a tantalising few metres from freedom. But his smoothly executed plan seems to be unravelling at this point. The first set of explosives he uses fails to blow the armoured door open.

**08.27**

He ropes the guards into assisting him in his attempt to force the weakened door open, to no avail. A second set of explosives on this door doesn’t do the trick either.

**08.29**

Faïd begins to worry, but he has the presence of mind and resourcefulness to find another way out. He places one of the last two explosive packs on the barred window next to the armoured door and retreats with the guard to cover. Yet another blast resonates through Sequedin prison – this one does the job.

**08.30**

Squeezing through the bars with all four of his hostages in tow, Faïd is just a few metres from freedom. Concerned for the lives of their colleagues, the guard manning the entrance releases the gates and all five men walk on to the last barrier.

**08.32**

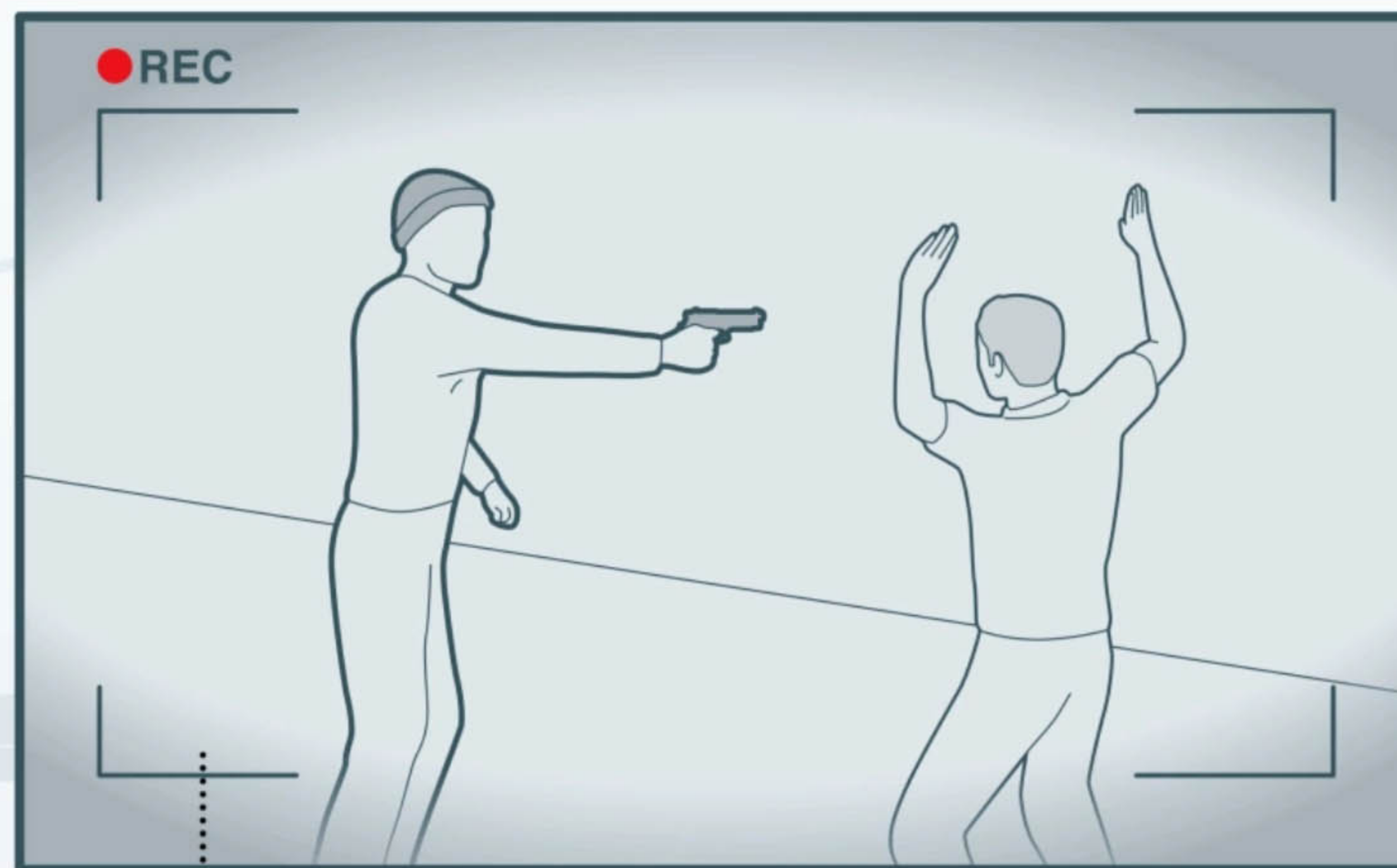
The final door is no match for Faïd’s remaining explosive charge, leaving a gaping hole in the outer prison wall. Faïd and his four captives march down a tarmac path to where Faïd knows an accomplice waits to take him away from his captors.



# BLOW THE BLOODY DOORS OFF

EXECUTED WITH THE SMOOTH EFFICIENCY OF A CRIMINAL GENIUS, THE AUDACITY OF RÉDOINE FAÏD'S ESCAPE CATCHES THE SEQUEDIN PRISON AUTHORITIES COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE

**1** As prisoners file through to the lobby for visitation, Faïd pulls his gun, grabs a female guard and shouts, "Couche-Toi, Couche Toi, J'ai un flingue!" ("Lie down, lie down, I have a gun!") The guards immediately oblige the gangster, and he takes four hostages as an insurance policy.



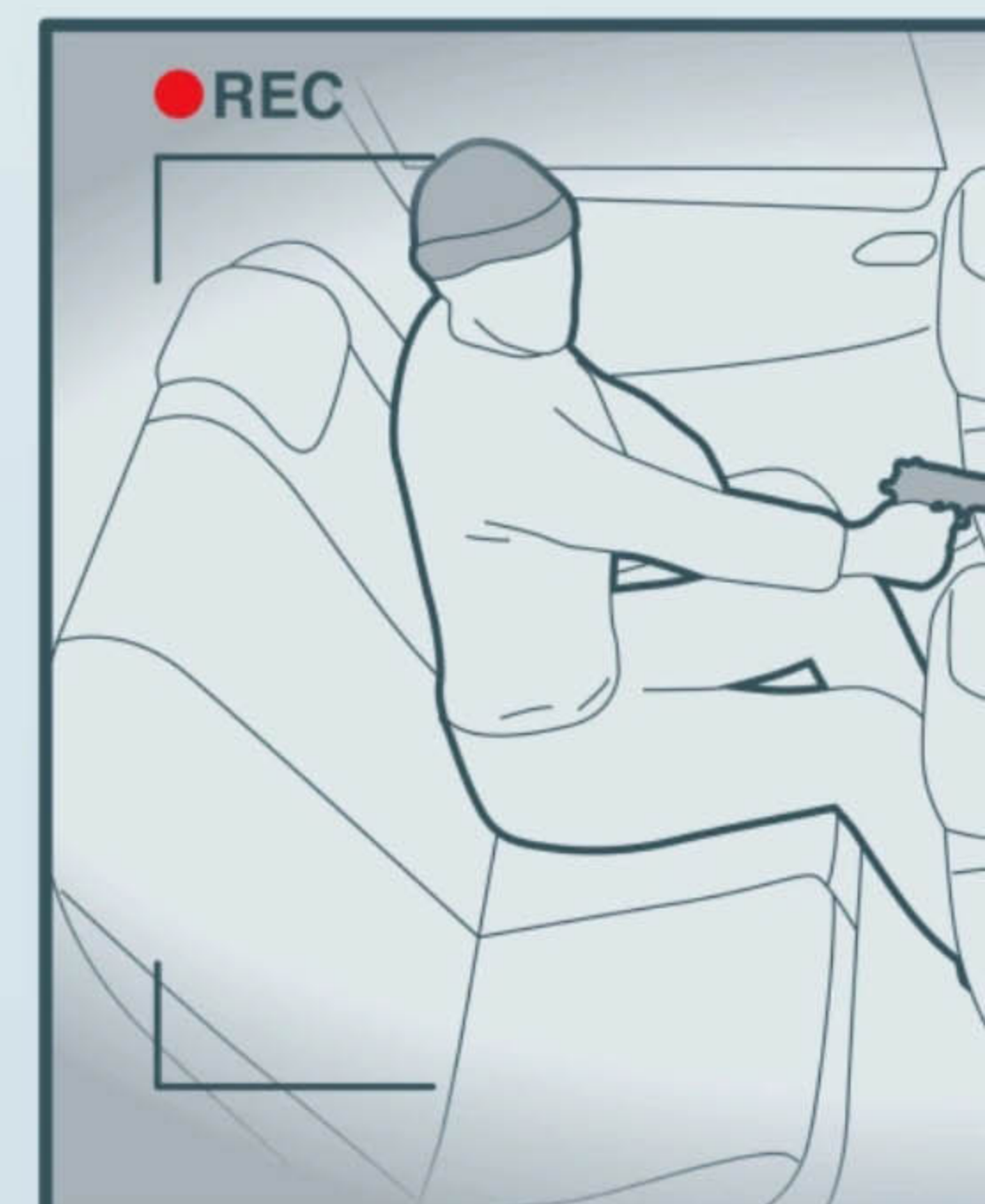
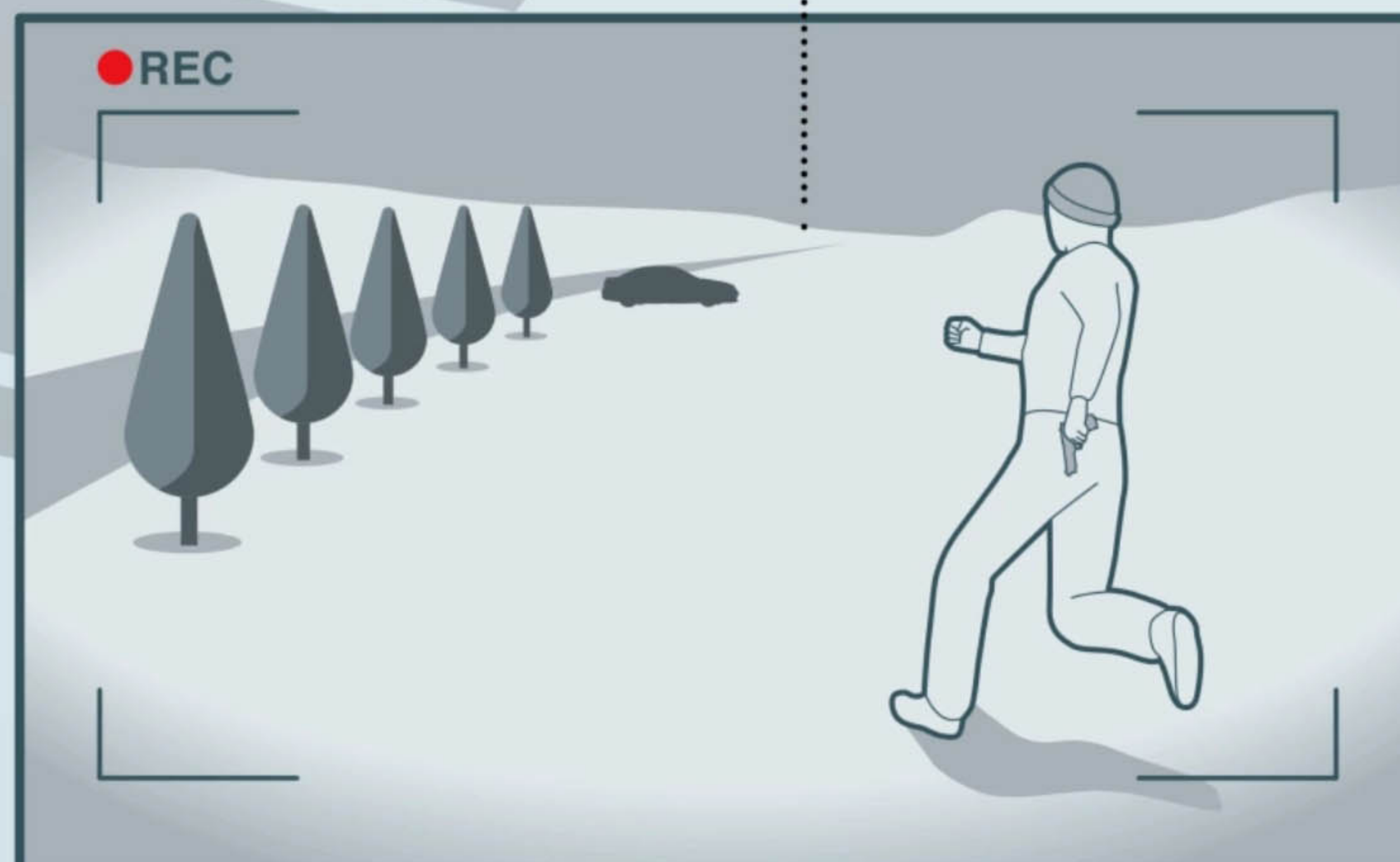
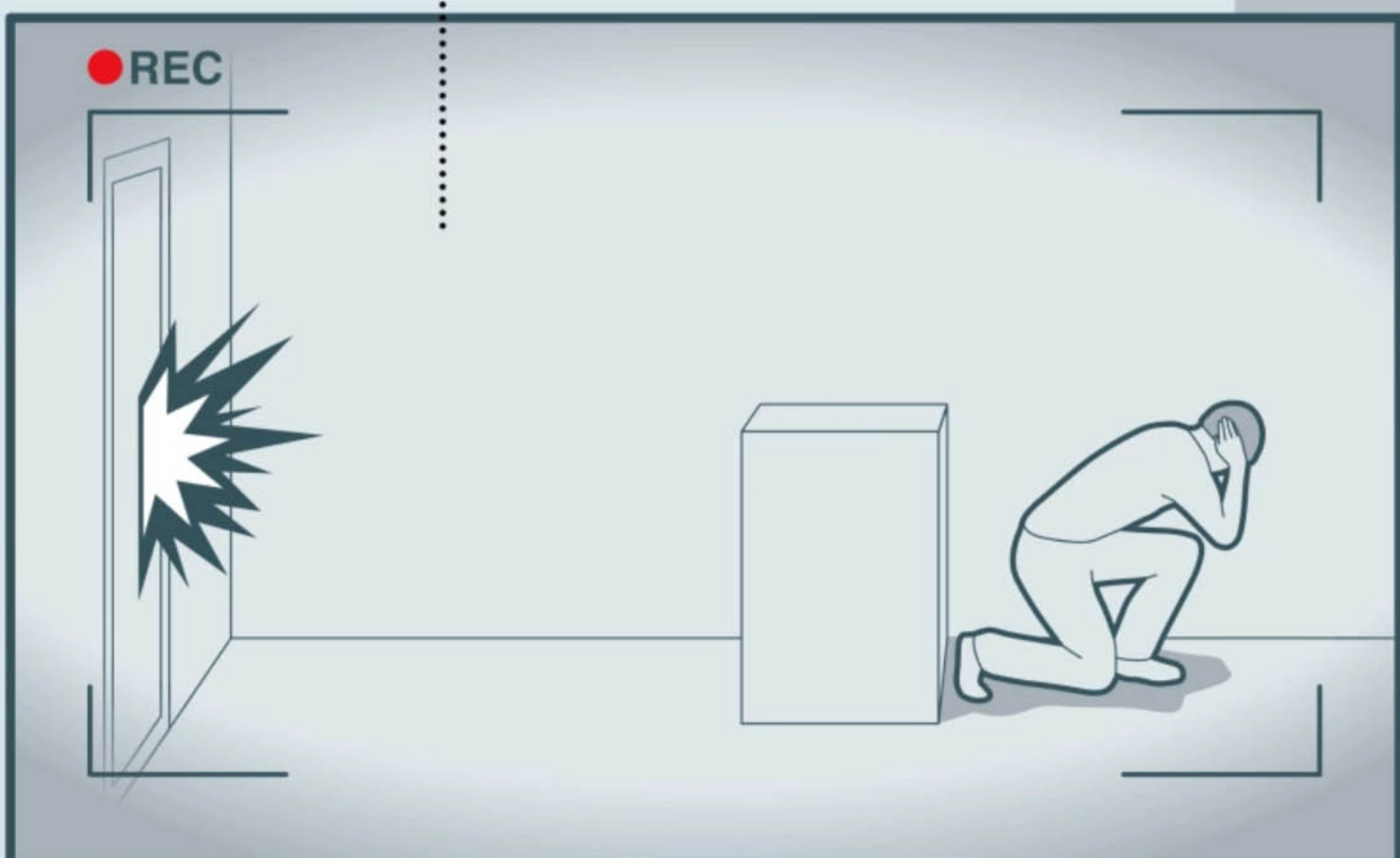
**2** He repeatedly threatens them – "Think about your families, don't play cowboys." One of the prison guards later remarks in an interview that he thought Faïd appeared very calm and composed, and that he felt sure he would kill one of them if he had to.

D952

**4** In his bag are several packs of PEP-500, plastic explosives that have been smuggled into the prison. When two sets of explosions fails to open one of the final armoured doors, Faïd's conviction wobbles – "I thought at that moment it was all over and it was going to be a failure," he admits in a later interview.

**5** Finally free, Faïd releases three of the guards and moves around the perimeter of the prison with just one hostage and the police keeping a respectful distance. The escape has taken just 20 minutes and a total of seven explosions, with no one killed or injured.

NORTH





# EXIT WITH A BANG

WAS IT THE ADRENALINE, THE QUICK RICHES OR THE NOTORIETY THAT FAÏD FOUND SO IRRESISTIBLE? WHAT LED TO HIS ULTIMATE DOWNFALL?

A big budget scriptwriter couldn't have penned a plot more implausible than Faïd's escape, yet he had freed himself in such a brazen fashion that his criminal celebrity status skyrocketed overnight. The pride of the French prison authority was left smarting and Interpol immediately pegged Faïd at the top of its most-wanted list. Hours after the escape, alerts had been sent to 190 countries.

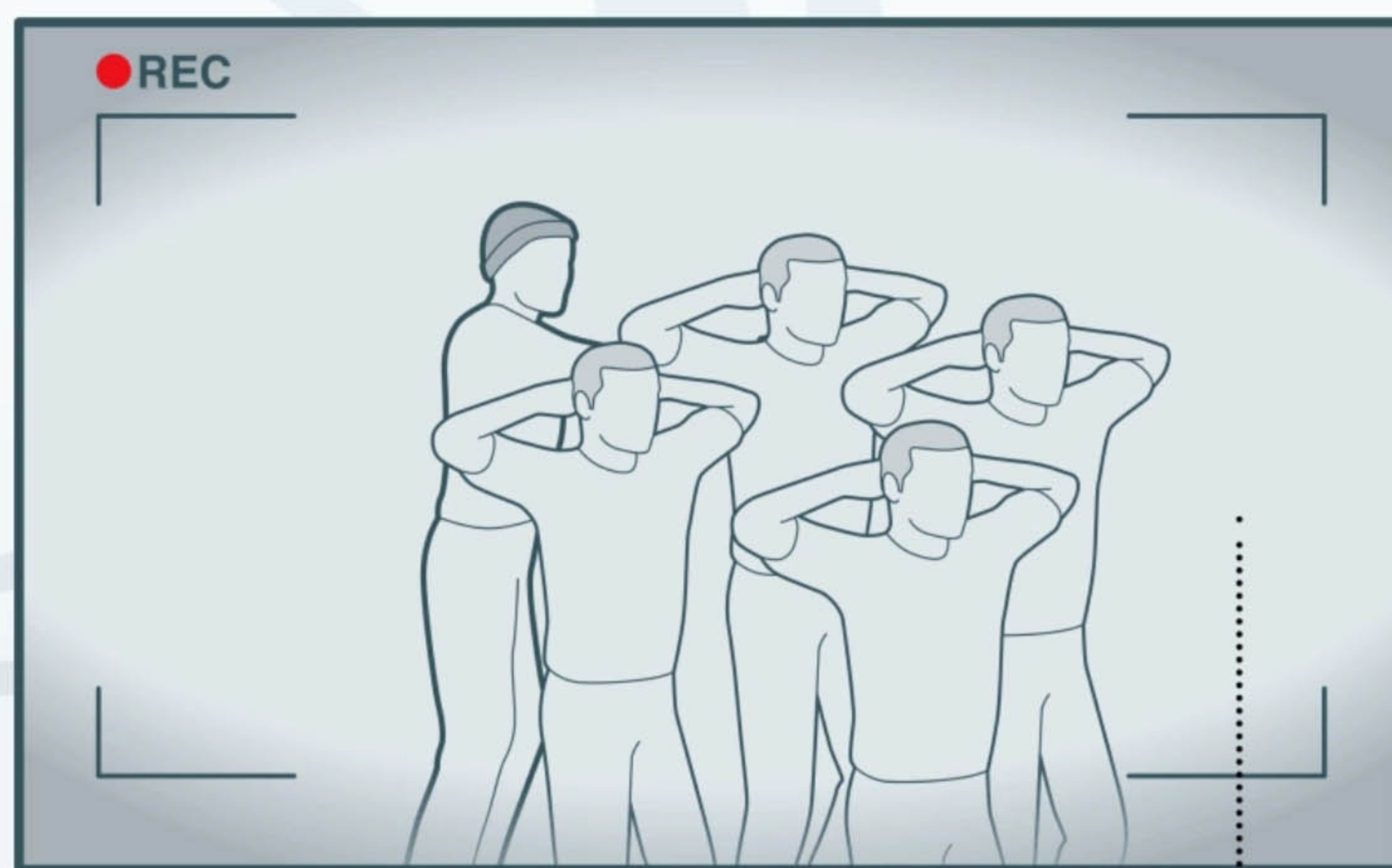
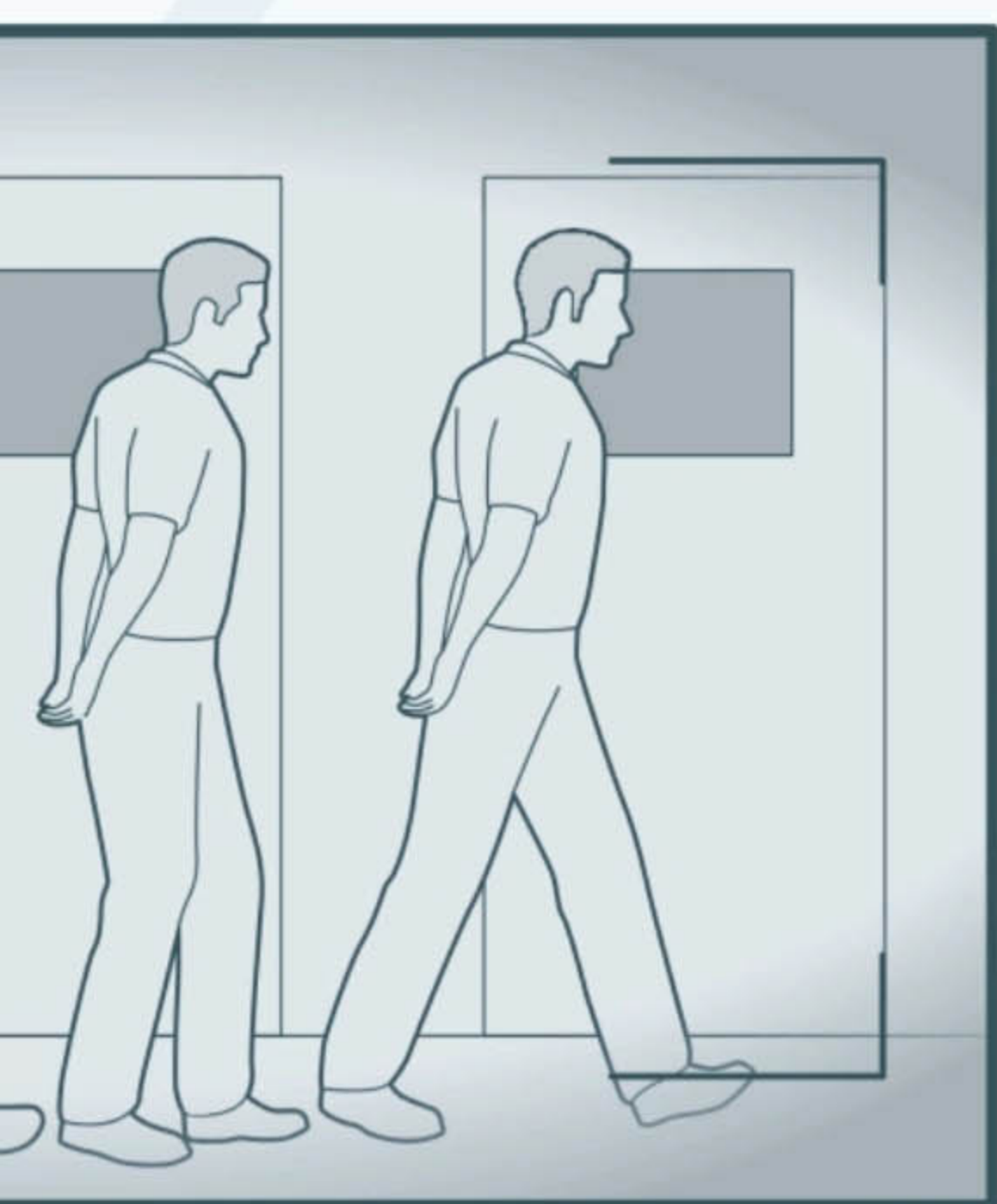
The investigation began in earnest with the scene of the crime, where detectives searched for anything that might help them track the fugitive. Alongside the trail of rubble and wreckage Faïd had left in his wake, they found the blasted remains of the explosives. Acquiring the packs of PEP-500 was beyond the reach of any common criminal – they were military-grade and manufactured in the Balkans. Parts of his discarded 'escape kit' was also discovered in his cell along with a single 9mm cartridge at the bottom of a bottle of detergent. Police have no idea to this day how he managed to smuggle all this contraband into the prison, or who his inside men were. Two Sequedin inmates were questioned along with one of the prisoner's brothers and all four of the guards who were taken hostage were closely monitored for weeks afterwards, but none admitted to assisting Faïd or having any knowledge of his plan.

Meanwhile, Faïd had seemingly evaporated into the French underworld. The fact that Interpol had issued a 'Red Notice' – an international wanted person alert – would have made it very difficult for him to fly or cross the French border into another country. But this was not impossible, certainly not for a criminal as connected and resourceful as Faïd.

Three weeks into the search and with the window of opportunity for his escape to a country beyond their reach yawning wide, police finally got a break. An anonymous tip pointed the investigation in the direction of the hotels around Charles De Gaulle Airport. Police immediately checked the security cameras in the area and hit pay dirt: Faïd had grown a beard, long hair and was wearing glasses but was still recognisable. They'd missed him by a day, but his accomplice, a petty crook known to the police, had foolishly checked them both into another hotel under his own name. They followed the paper trail to another hotel where finally, on midnight of 28 May, French police raided the room in which Faïd and company were sleeping, and arrested both men. On the night table next to Faïd's bed was a gun and 5,000 Euros in cash, enough to buy the fugitive the false documents he needed to escape the country.

This time, French justice took no chances with such a felon: Faïd was put into solitary confinement in Fleury-Mérogis Prison, Paris, where he can be found today. He may have achieved the high profile and attention he sought, but Faïd is not without regrets. "If I could do it all again," he told the press, "I wouldn't have done any of it."

**“POLICE HAVE NO IDEA HOW HE MANAGED TO SMUGGLE ALL THIS CONTRABAND INTO THE PRISON”**



**3** Faïd knows that his route is very exposed, so he surrounds himself with his four hostages as he makes his way through the open courtyard.

A25

**6** A Peugeot 306 waits for Faïd and his captive near the motorway at the end of the road, with the engine running and an accomplice in the driver's seat. The two vault a barrier before Faïd indicates for the guard to sit in the passenger seat, while he opens the back seat door and sits directly behind the hostage, his gun trained on the back of his head. As the vehicle pulls away, Faïd encourages the driver to "Speed up, speed up."

**7** Around three kilometres later and they have managed to shake their tail. The driver pulls over next to a disused prison where another getaway vehicle has been left. The hostage is released and Faïd puts the Peugeot 306 to the torch, then escapes with his accomplice.







**RIGHT** People take photos of a property in Roseville, Michigan in 2012 after police received a tip-off that Jimmy Hoffa's body was buried there



**WHAT HAPPENED TO HOFFA?**

# DIGGING FOR THE TRUTH

IN THE THREE DECADES SINCE THE JIMMY HOFFA CASE WENT COLD, DOZENS OF WITNESSES AND EXPERTS HAVE COME FORWARD: COULD THE KILLERS BE HIDING BEHIND A WALL OF MISINFORMATION?

WORDS SETH FERRANTI

## PART 3

It seems everyone wants to be a part of the Jimmy Hoffa myth. Conspiracy theorists and organised crime experts have put forth different ideas about what happened to him, but Hoffa's former confederates in the mob have made the most noise. Every year or so a new criminal comes forward with information about where Hoffa's body is or what really happened to him, but none of the claims have provided any evidence strong enough to finally close the case. A mishmash of tales, mixing fact with fiction, and outright speculation have emerged, further clouding the reality of what happened and leaving law enforcement scratching their heads over four decades later.



**W**hen Teamsters president Jimmy Hoffa first disappeared no one really knew what had happened. Different theories and leads were developed by law enforcement, but nothing ever came of it and the case has never been solved. Despite tens of thousands of police man hours being spent on the investigation, dozens of news-worthy searches and a host of tips and leads, the facts of what really happened have never emerged.

No body was found and no one ever arrested or charged for the crime, the case remains open – a mystery to the world and one of the most iconic unsolved crimes in history. It has dominated news headlines in the United States whenever a new theory has surfaced – with prosecutors or ambitious law enforcement officials looking to make a name for themselves, or mobsters that have come forward, claiming they know the truth and are finally willing to set the record straight.

“Of all the theories I’ve personally heard over the years, the cremation version outplays the others in my opinion,” organised crime expert and Mafia historian Christian Cipollini, the author of *Lucky Luciano: Mysterious Tales Of A Gangland Legend*, tells **Real Crime**. “Besides how logical and accessible the cremation method was for those guys, I found it ironic and interesting that victims were disposed of via the funeral home. Jump to the cremation story of Hoffa and immediately I started to think that absolutely, this was a plausible disposal method. It’s just uncanny how these gangsters had interests in funeral homes and crematoriums.”

In the first couple of years after the disappearance, every time a wise guy was picked up they were asked about Hoffa’s murder. All of them had the same answer: they didn’t know anything. But as time has passed, former mobsters

**BELOW** Hoffa with his son, who is the current Teamsters president. Following in his father’s footsteps

**ABOVE RIGHT** It has been a never ending search for Hoffa’s body. Police have followed every lead but the searches and digs have turned up nothing



**LAW ENFORCEMENT HAS FOLLOWED EVERY LEAD — SEEKING TO BE THE ONE THAT FINALLY SOLVED THE UNSOLVABLE CASE**



and writers have claimed to have discovered the truth. Even though solving the crime has seemed improbable, law enforcement has followed every lead – seeking to be the one that finally solved the unsolvable case.

The Hoffa case is the only criminal investigation that has capturing the public’s imagination in this way, like none before. It has spawned numerous books, documentaries, articles, and even Hollywood movies, even as some of the first plausible leads that were pursued by law enforcement have been discounted.

“From the moment Hoffa vanished there have been an infinite number of theories,” explains Cipollini. “And as time went on there were more and more connected guys offering to reveal what happened. Like any major unsolved crime though, a lot of tips and tales end up inconclusive. The story of shipping a 55-gallon drum with a body in it across the country would seem entirely too risky and arduous a task for the mob to take on. But that didn’t stop the feds from investigating.”

If anyone ever finds out what happened to Hoffa’s body – whether he was cremated, buried, chewed up in a meat grinder, or shipped across the country in a 55-gallon drum and buried under Giants Stadium – it could shed some light on who really murdered the former Teamster boss. And, with the interest generated by all the media hoopla and public scrutiny, it seems the Hoffa case will never die.

“The Hoffa story, like any major unsolved crime, strikes a chord with pop culture and will always generate a level of interest,” says Cipollini. “If some new detail, clue or even an outlandish confession arises, the media is all over it because we the public are still enthralled.”



# THREE KEY THEORIES

THE THEORIES CONCERNING HOFFA'S DEMISE HAVE ABOUNDED OVER THE YEARS WITH THE RUMOURS OF HIM BEING BURIED UNDER THE GIANTS STADIUM PERSISTING. BUT THERE ARE THREE MAIN THEORIES THAT HOLD THE MOST CLOUT



## FALSE LEADS AND COOPERATING WITNESSES

In 2001, DNA testing found samples of Hoffa's hair in Anthony 'Tony Jack' Giacalone's son's car, indicating that Hoffa had been in that car. This supported the law enforcement theory that Hoffa was abducted from the Red Fox restaurant in the Mercury Marquis for his supposed meeting with Anthony 'Tony Pro' Provenzano in a bid to end their feud. It's an accepted fact that Hoffa got in that car, but what happened afterwards is the big mystery.

"I haven't ruled out the role the Giacalones had in the Hoffa disappearance," Cipollini says. "There's absolutely some credence to the story of Giacalone's son's car having been used in the crime at some point. Was the son in the car when Hoffa disappeared? Doubtful. The car certainly produced the hair though."

And as the tales of former mobsters-turned-cooperating witnesses have emerged the story has taken on a life of its own. But how much credibility do these former Mafiosos have? Most of them have just been trying to save themselves from serious time and they will tell the feds whatever it is they want to hear, attempting to cement their place in history by attaching themselves to the Hoffa mythology.

"Same reason everyday people swap Hoffa tales over a beer," Cipollini says. "Everyone wants to know or share what they think they know. The Hoffa case has become one of the greatest pop culture American mysteries of all time, ranking up there with the mystery of D.B. Cooper and who killed the Black Dahlia."

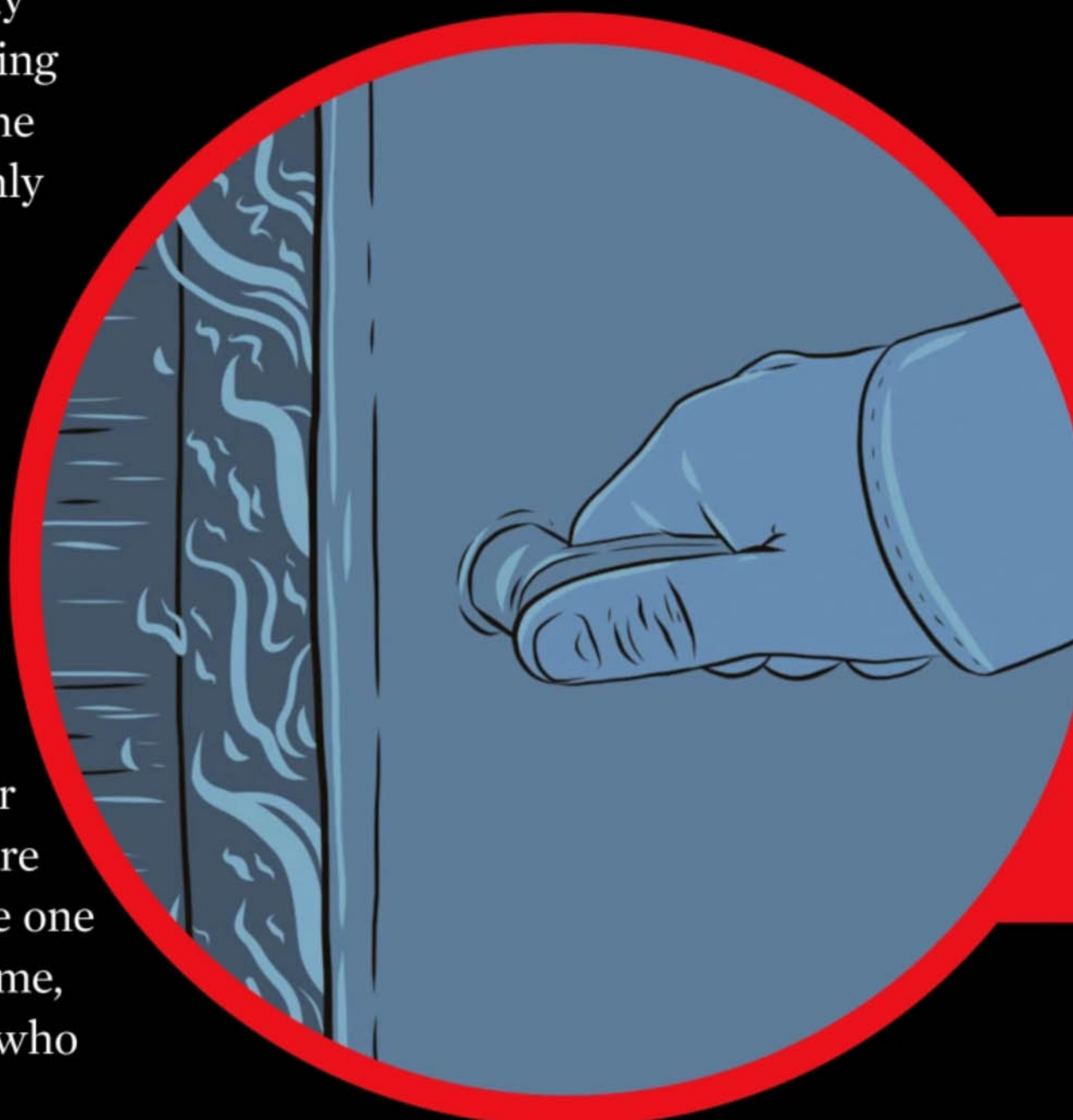


## GROUND BEEF

Detroit Mafioso 'Tony Pal' Palazzolo was recorded by the FBI boasting of how he stuffed Hoffa's body into a sausage auger at the Detroit Sausage Company – a business he ran and used as a mob front. In 2013, former Detroit Mafia underboss Tony Zerilli told the feds that Palazzolo kidnapped Hoffa in Tony Jack's son's car and bashed his head in with a shovel before feeding him into the meat grinder.

## DRUM AND DUMPED

'Little Ralphie' Picardo was another mob informer who fed the FBI info on what became of Hoffa. He told the feds that Sally Bugs and the Andretta brothers killed Hoffa for Tony Pro, stuck him in a 55-pound drum, and shipped him back east by Gateway Transportation. If this happened, Hoffa might be buried under Giants Stadium.



## INCINERATOR INCINERATION

With the mob having significant interests in the sanitation business in Detroit it should be no surprise that many experts, Cipollini included, subscribe to the cremation theory. Mobsters owned both Tri-County Sanitation and Central Sanitation at the time and Central Sanitation, along with its incinerator, suspiciously burned to the ground shortly after Hoffa disappeared.



Cipollini thinks any mob-related rumour or theory might be viable, even the allegation that Hoffa's body was destroyed in a meat rendering plant, ground up and disposed of like bad meat. "In the underworld, anything is possible it seems," he says. "But I personally lean hard towards the recent version of cremation."

"I don't know if law enforcement loves, hates or is indifferent to the headlines when it comes to the Hoffa sensationalism. I'm sure if some agents legitimately and concretely discovered the true and full story then that would likely be a big public relations boost. As for the authorities reaching too far to find the answers, they are probably to some degree, but then again this is one of those cold cases that keeps churning up new so-called revelations, confessions and tips, which of course would certainly keep law enforcement busy."

One of the biggest leads came in 2006 when the FBI got a tip from former underworld figure Don Wells, who was tight with the leader of the Teamsters' so-called 'Goon Squad', Rolland 'Big Mac' McMaster. A tough guy and leg breaker from way back who busted up and put his hands on those who opposed the union in any way. Trying to obtain a get-out-of-jail-free card by giving up the info that law enforcement had been seeking for 30 years, Wells told police that Hoffa was buried on McMaster's farm in Commerce Township, Michigan after a drug bust.

"The FBI showed up at Rolland McMaster's farm after 30 years and started digging," Cipollini says. "McMaster had connections to Hoffa, but once the FBI started digging on the property Wells claimed held the remains of Hoffa, they found nothing." McMaster died a year later and any secrets he might have had went to the grave with him. As time has moved on a lot of people that may or may not have been involved in the Hoffa abduction have been killed, gone to prison, or died of old age. In reality it seems like the case might never be solved.

## FRANK SHEERAN'S CONFESSION

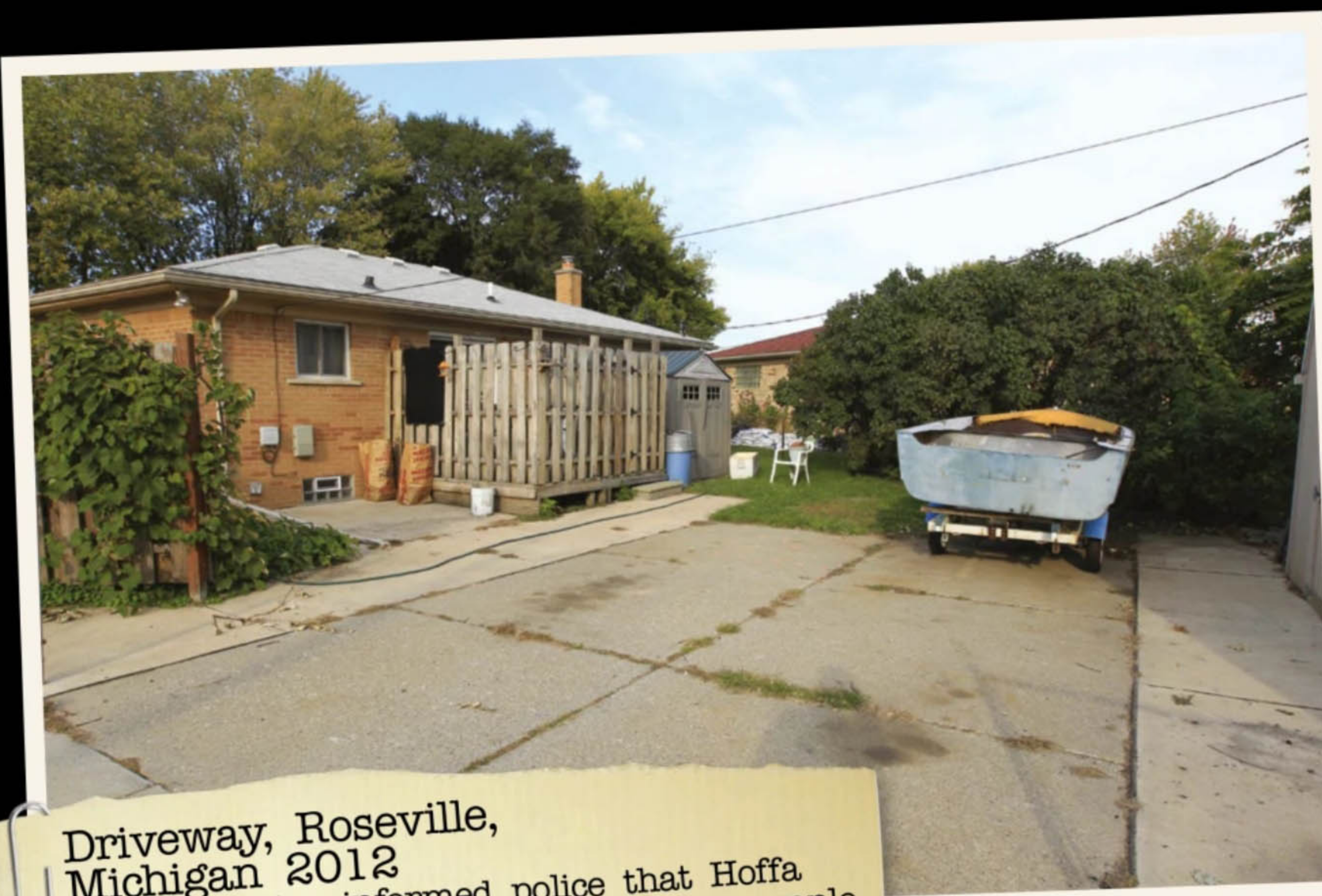
Netflix subscribers may have seen adverts for the new Martin Scorsese film, *The Irishman*, coming to the network in the near future. With a star-studded cast including Robert De Niro, Joe Pesci and Al Pacino, the film will recount the Hoffa killing from the point of view of former mob hitman, union heavy, and friend of Hoffa, Frank Sheeran. Known as 'the Irishman' Sheeran admitted to killing Hoffa on his death bed. A confession that seemingly ended the mystery... but let's not be too hasty.

Scorsese adapted the film from the 2004 book *I Heard You Paint Houses*, by former prosecutor Charles Brandt, who interviewed Sheeran before his death in 2003. 'I heard you paint houses' is allegedly the first thing that Hoffa ever said to Sheeran. It's a metaphor in mob circles that killers and hitmen use, slang for the blood that paints the wall when someone is shot and murdered.

"Of all the hearsay and confessions so far, Sheeran's story seems to have the most logic and evidence backing it up," Cipollini says. But a number of experts dispute this theory. Dan Moldea, who wrote *The Hoffa Wars* in 1978 and is an expert on the case, has been very vocal on the subject and claims that Frank Sheeran's confession holds no weight. However, with the movie coming out this version might eventually be construed as the truth, despite the liberties that Hollywood can often take when making movies.

## THE GRAVE CIRCUMSTANCES

DIG AFTER DIG AFTER DIG: LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS HAVE SEARCHED AND DUG UP THE GROUND AT OVER A DOZEN SITES LOOKING FOR HOFFA'S BODY



Driveway, Roseville, Michigan 2012

After a tipster informed police that Hoffa was buried here officials took a core sample and drilled a small hole in the concrete to test for human remains. They also tore up the floor of a shed. The tip was eventually called a ruse to keep police off the trail.

Sheeran claimed that he shot Hoffa in a westside Detroit house on the orders of Pennsylvania mobster Russell 'The Old Man' Bufalino. According to the Detroit Free Press, Oakland County detectives discovered floorboards coated with blood residue in the house, but an FBI crime lab report stated that the blood wasn't Hoffa's. As the mystery has become part of popular culture and Hoffa has remained an iconic figure over 40 years after his disappearance, countless law enforcement types have admitted that the case will never be closed or solved.

"Almost everybody who is involved has gone to meet their maker," Keith Corbett, a US Attorney for Detroit's Organized Crime Strike Force, told the Detroit Free Press in 2015. "The list of people who have reliable information is really short. You could probably count them on one hand with a couple fingers left over. I think it's extremely unlikely that there will be any new developments in the case." But in the Hoffa case, experts have learned to never say never.

## LATEST THEORY

Just recently, on the 42nd anniversary of Hoffa's disappearance, true crime expert Dan Moldea put forth a new name that might have had something to do with Hoffa's demise. Moldea said a source told him that New Jersey



“THE LIST OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE RELIABLE INFORMATION IS REALLY SHORT. YOU COULD PROBABLY COUNT THEM ON ONE HAND”





**House floorboards, Detroit, Michigan 2004**  
Police in Oakland County removed the floorboards at a house where Frank Sheeran said he killed Hoffa to see if they could find traces of Hoffa's blood.

**Hampton Township, Michigan**  
In 2003, Oakland County Sheriffs dug under a backyard pool searching for evidence.

**Roseville, Michigan**  
In 2012, police tore up the floor of a shed in Roseville looking for Hoffa.

**Jersey City, New Jersey**  
Mobster Phillip Moscato claimed prior to his death that Hoffa's body had been buried at his landfill in Jersey City.

**Oakland Township, Michigan**  
The FBI dug up a farm once owned by Detroit boss Jack Tocco in 2013.

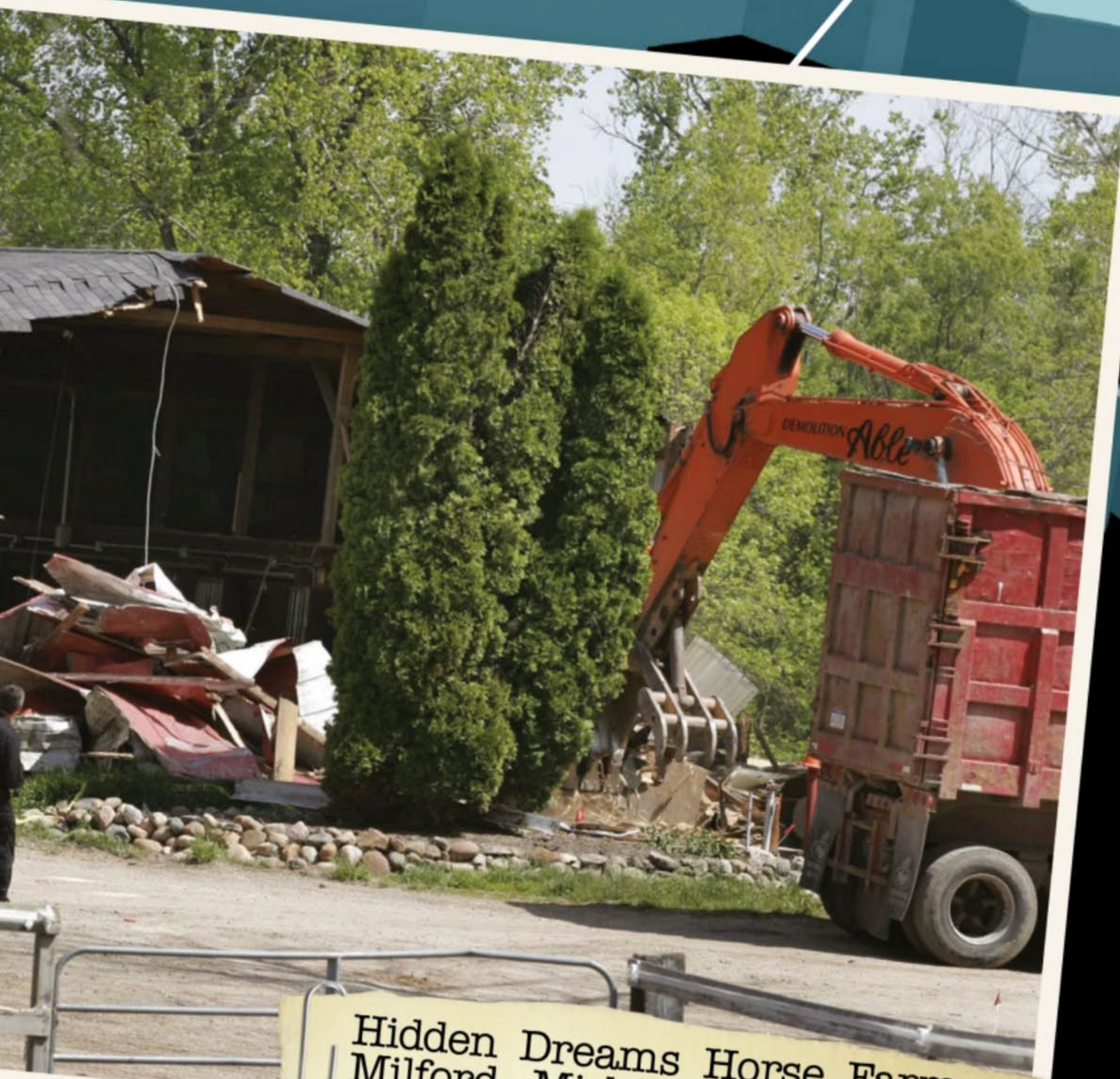
**Renaissance Center, Detroit**  
In 2008, Marvin 'The Weasel' Elkind told the press that Hoffa was buried under the Renaissance Center.

**Commerce Township, Michigan**  
Mob associate Don Wells told the FBI in 2006 that Hoffa was buried at Rolland McMaster's farm.

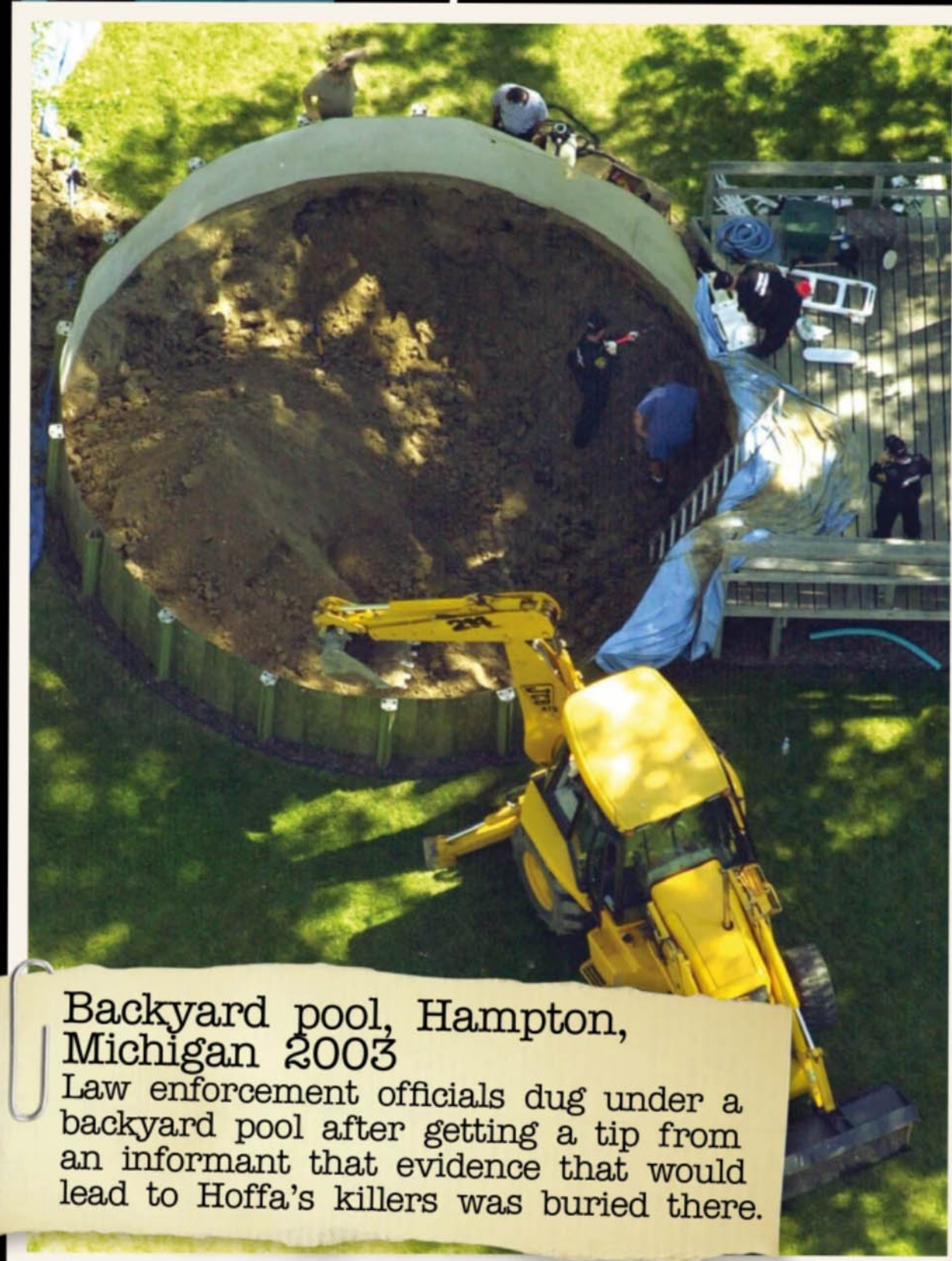
**Florida swamp**  
In 1982, Mafia turncoat Charles Allen claimed that Hoffa's body was chopped up and thrown into a Florida swamp.

**Inkster, Michigan**  
In 2013, an informant told the FBI Hoffa was put in a wood chipper here.

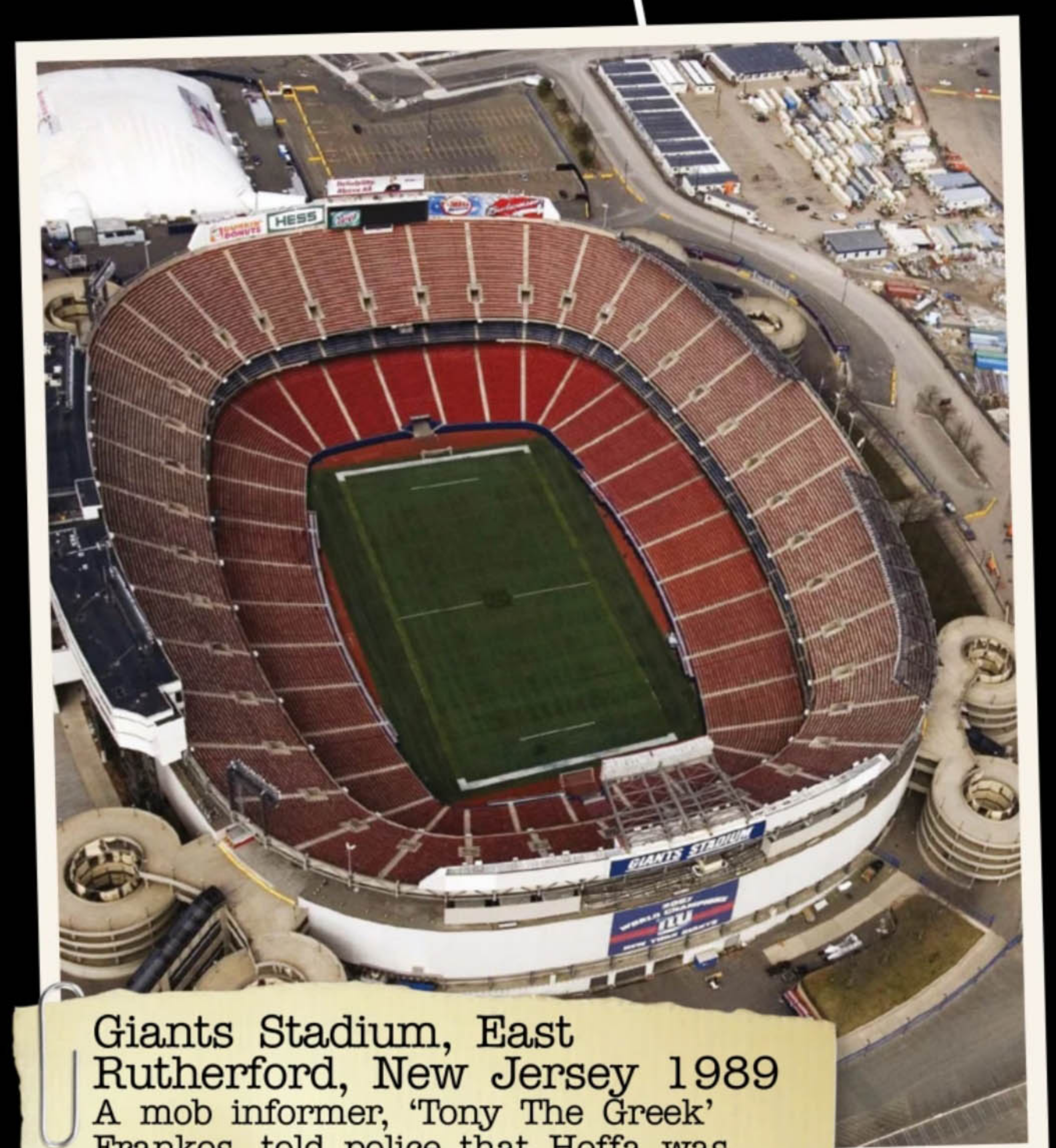
**Bloomfield Township, Michigan**  
Following Frank Sheeran's death bed confession in 2003, police pulled up floorboards where Sheeran says he killed Hoffa.



**Hidden Dreams Horse Farm, Milford, Michigan 2006**  
The FBI conducted a search of Rolland McMaster's farm after getting a tip that Hoffa was buried there. The search proved fruitless though.



**Backyard pool, Hampton, Michigan 2003**  
Law enforcement officials dug under a backyard pool after getting a tip from an informant that evidence that would lead to Hoffa's killers was buried there.



**Giants Stadium, East Rutherford, New Jersey 1989**  
A mob informer, 'Tony The Greek' Frankos, told police that Hoffa was buried underneath Giants Stadium. This urban legend has floated around for years and has become a part of pop culture lore.

**Japan**  
In 2006, Richard 'The Iceman' Kuklinski told the FBI he killed Hoffa, chopped him up, and stuffed him in a Toyota shipped to Japan.





A photo of Hoffa in happier times before he disappeared and before he became one of the most iconic figures in Mafia and pop culture lore

mobster Vinnie Ravo, who was associated with the Genovese crime family as well as being friendly with several New York Giants American football players in the 1980s, played a part in the Hoffa disappearance. Moldea retreads the Salvatore ‘Sally Bugs’ Briguglio theory – one that law enforcement investigated thoroughly and gives more credence to the 55-gallon drum theory.

Moldea wrote that Sally Bugs killed Hoffa and, along with other Detroit mob associates, stuffed the slain union leader into a 55-gallon drum and shipped the body to the East Coast on Gateway Transportation, a mob-controlled trucking company. Hoffa was laid to rest in his cylindrical coffin in a Hackensack River landfill in Jersey City. The New Jersey land was owned and operated by Genovese soldier Phillip Moscato, who for years fended off rumours that he had something to do with Hoffa’s death.

NFL players Lawrence Taylor, Brian Kelley, and Brad Van Pelt, all with the New York Giants, were good friends with Ravo, a little-known Mafioso who ran a bar near Giants Stadium in the 1980s. And with rumours persisting that Hoffa was entombed in the concrete of Giants Stadium, Moldea’s new theory has gained immediate relevance due to the proximity of Ravo’s bar to the stadium.

Experts have always claimed that Hoffa being buried in the foundations of Giants Stadium was fantasy, but with this new evidence unearthed by Moldea it seems the rumour could be true. Unfortunately, since the stadium was demolished in 2010 no one will ever know the truth. This new evidence might finally help law enforcement officials tie everything together. The truth has always been there, but authorities have just never been able to put it all together.

Ravo and Moscato are both dead now, but Moldea claims his source was in tight with both mobsters.

Moscato’s landfill in Jersey City, under the Pulaski Skyway expressway, was searched by the FBI in the 1970s after Hoffa’s disappearance, but they didn’t find anything. Moldea claimed that Moscato alluded to the disposal of Hoffa’s body in the toxic-waste dump with Sally Bugs, in an interview the historian conducted before Moscato’s death in 2013. ‘Tony Pro’ Provenzano’s driver and confidant Ralph ‘Little Ralphie’ Picardo, cooperated with the FBI and pointed them to the landfill, claiming that they would find Hoffa’s body there. But no body was found.

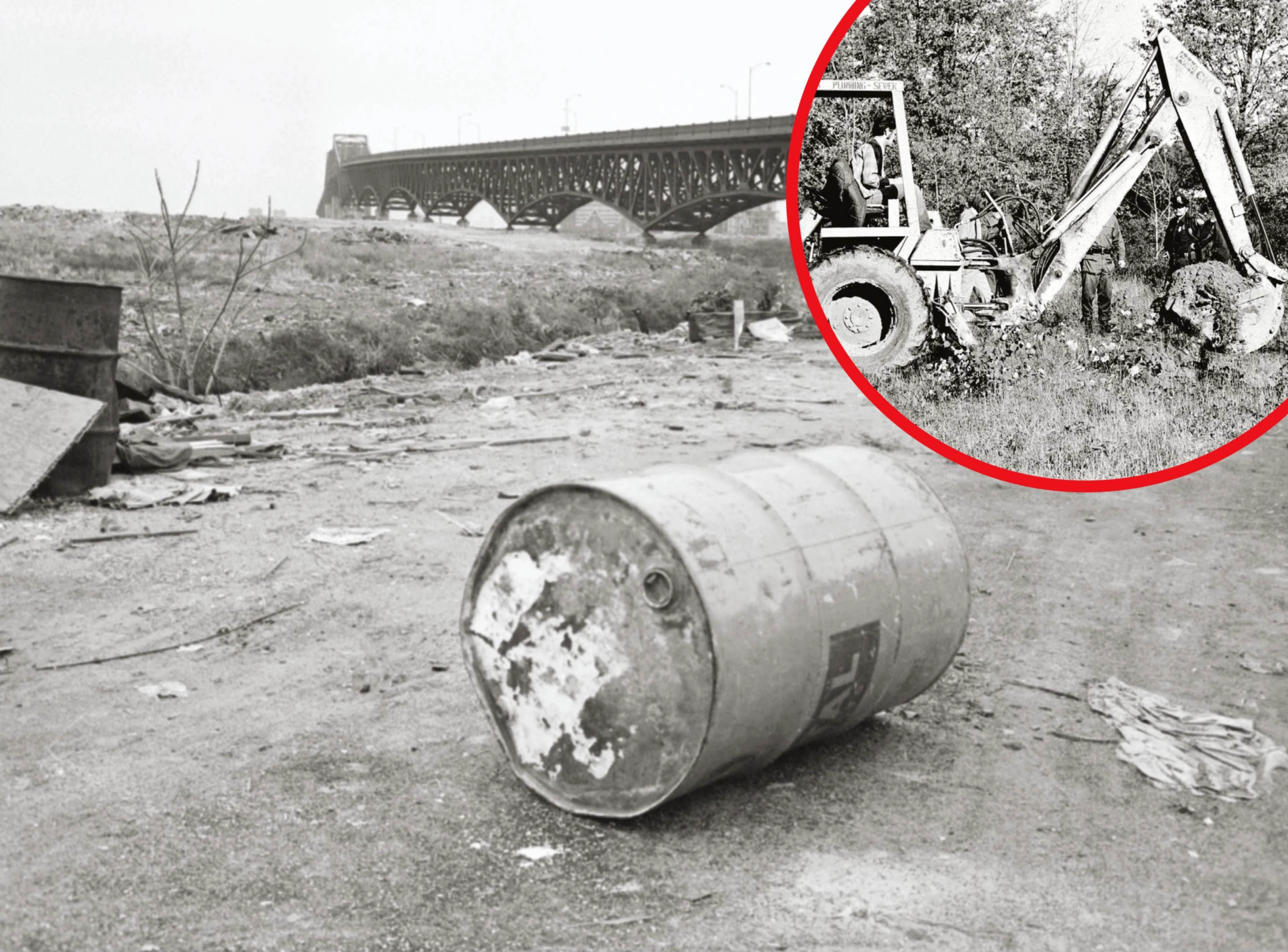
Allegedly Tony Pro found out about his driver’s cooperation and moved the body before the FBI came to dig, giving relevance to the Giants Stadium theory. Little Ralphie told the FBI that Tommy Andretta, his brother Steve, and Sally Bugs grabbed Hoffa from the Red Fox and killed him, before getting him shipped back east for burial in the landfill. But is this what really happened? So many layers of truth and untruth have been accumulated in this case, it’s hard to see what really transpired. Almost like it was by design.

## DELIBERATE DISAPPEARANCE

“Could Hoffa have just made himself disappear?” Cipollini asks. “As history had demonstrated time and time again, anything is possible, especially in the underworld culture... I still doubt Hoffa ran off and changed his identity.”

It was a very different world in 1975 and who’s to say if Jimmy Hoffa didn’t disappear on purpose. It was much easier to make yourself vanish back in the 1970s without the digital





## “THE MOB — IF THEY INDEED WHACKED HOFFA — MADE DAMN SURE IT WOULD BE THE MOST UNTRACEABLE HIT IN UNDERWORLD HISTORY”

footprints that people leave today. And with law enforcement being stymied in every other attempt to solve this case, what became of Hoffa has been wholly obfuscated.

“The police, the public, private investigators, researchers, the world at large has examined this case seven ways to Sunday and back again,” says Cipollini. “In my view, I think a lot of this has been perhaps overthought, whereas the actual truth probably resides in a very simple, forthright, non-complicated scenario, which is why I now lean toward the cremation story.

“Hoffa, being a very public and polarising figure, made the situation all the more difficult for the mob in terms of eliminating him. With that in mind, and regardless of whoever the actual perpetrators were, there had to be long-thought-out and debated ideas of how to remove Hoffa without any trace being left to connect the plot to the decision makers.”

The perpetrators were either very lucky or had a foolproof plan that involved multiple layers and levels. Numerous people working together to make one of the most noteworthy people in the United States just disappear, without a trace.

**ABOVE** A 55-gallon drum similar to the one that Hoffa was rumoured to have been stuffed into, at a New Jersey landfill investigated by the FBI for a body in 1975

**INSET** Authorities sought to quickly close the case in 1975, using a back-hoe to dig a Michigan field and woodland in more than a dozen places

“If any underworld rubout in history ranks as the most mysterious,” Cipollini tells us, “this one is it, because in 2017, and even with the most plausible accounts coming to light, it’s still unsolved because the mob – if they indeed whacked Hoffa – made damn sure it would be the most untraceable hit in underworld history.”

Despite the research of Hoffa experts, tell-all books by noted criminals or snitches’ tales to the authorities, we’re not really any closer to solving this mystery than we were 42 years ago. This mystery has grown in criminal lore to become a touchstone of popular culture. In books, movies, magazines, and even video games, Hoffa has lived on in the form of consumable media. A headline-grabbing figure in both life and in death, Hoffa’s disappearance has left experts musing on possible scenarios and trying to uncover the truth.

Experts like Cipollini still believe an answer will eventually be found. “I actually do believe the truth of the who, what, where and how of Jimmy Hoffa’s disappearance/death will someday no longer be a mystery,” Cipollini tells us. “The elements of the true story are already there. They just have to be put together in the right way.”



# CATCHING A KILLER COP

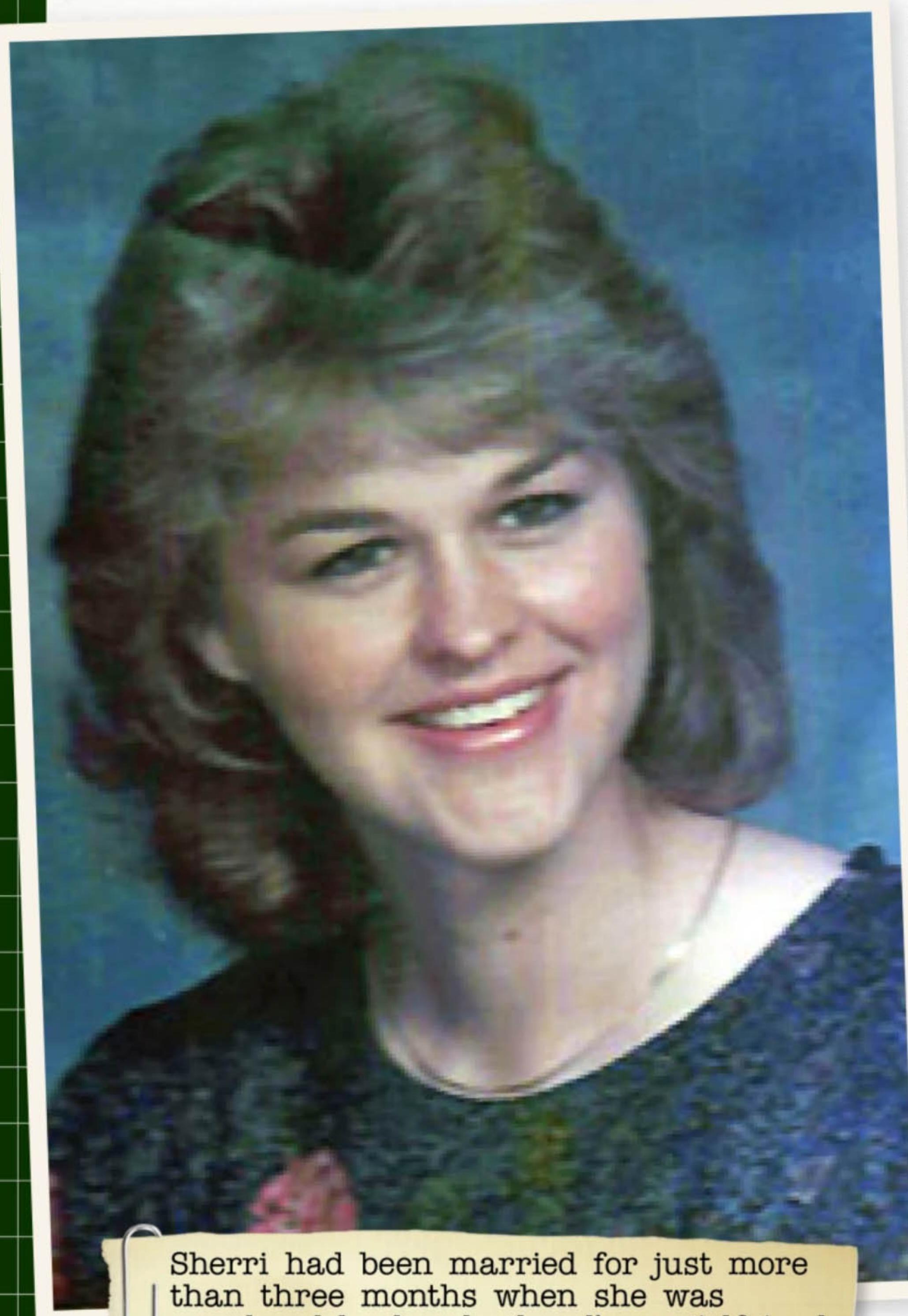
WHAT	MURDER
WHERE	LOS ANGELES, USA
WHEN	1986

AFTER 23 YEARS AND NO ARRESTS, THE COMB-THROUGH OF A MURDER CASE GONE COLD TURNED THE HEAT UP FOR THE LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT

WORDS TANITA MATTHEWS

## BACKGROUND

When newlywed John Ruetten returned from work to his Van Nuys home on 24 February 1986, he was greeted by a smear of blood on the door that was indicative of the scene inside. His once blushing bride, 29-year-old Sherri Rasmussen, lay cold in the living room with three bullet wounds in her chest. Her right eyelid was swollen from a forceful strike and there was a bite mark on the inner side of her left forearm. A glass balcony door upstairs was smashed and there were shards of glass strewn across the driveway. Rasmussen's silver BMW was also gone. The Los Angeles Police Department



Sherri had been married for just more than three months when she was murdered by her husband's ex-girlfriend

"Undercover police acquired DNA from a discarded drinks straw... Tests confirmed that the mouth on that straw had bitten Rasmussen"

would later say that this was the result of a burglary gone wrong.

Two .38-calibre bullets were recovered from the body and DNA samples were taken from the bite mark. A pink and green blanket was discovered at the scene by Homicide Detective Lyle Mayer – the killer had used the blanket to muffle the sound of two shots fired at the victim at point-blank range. Interviews later conducted determined that two Latin men who had burgled other houses in the neighbourhood as well as assaulted a woman were the likely killers. However, Rasmussen's father insisted that the police question his son-in-law's college girlfriend, Stephanie Lazarus, an art theft detective with the LAPD. His daughter had told him the details of several odd visits she had received from Lazarus including one at the medical centre where she worked. Supervising the investigation, Detective Mayer dismissed Mr Rasmussen's suggestion, as did Sherri's husband – he and Lazarus were old friends, there was nothing more to it, and his wife had never mentioned these impromptu visits.

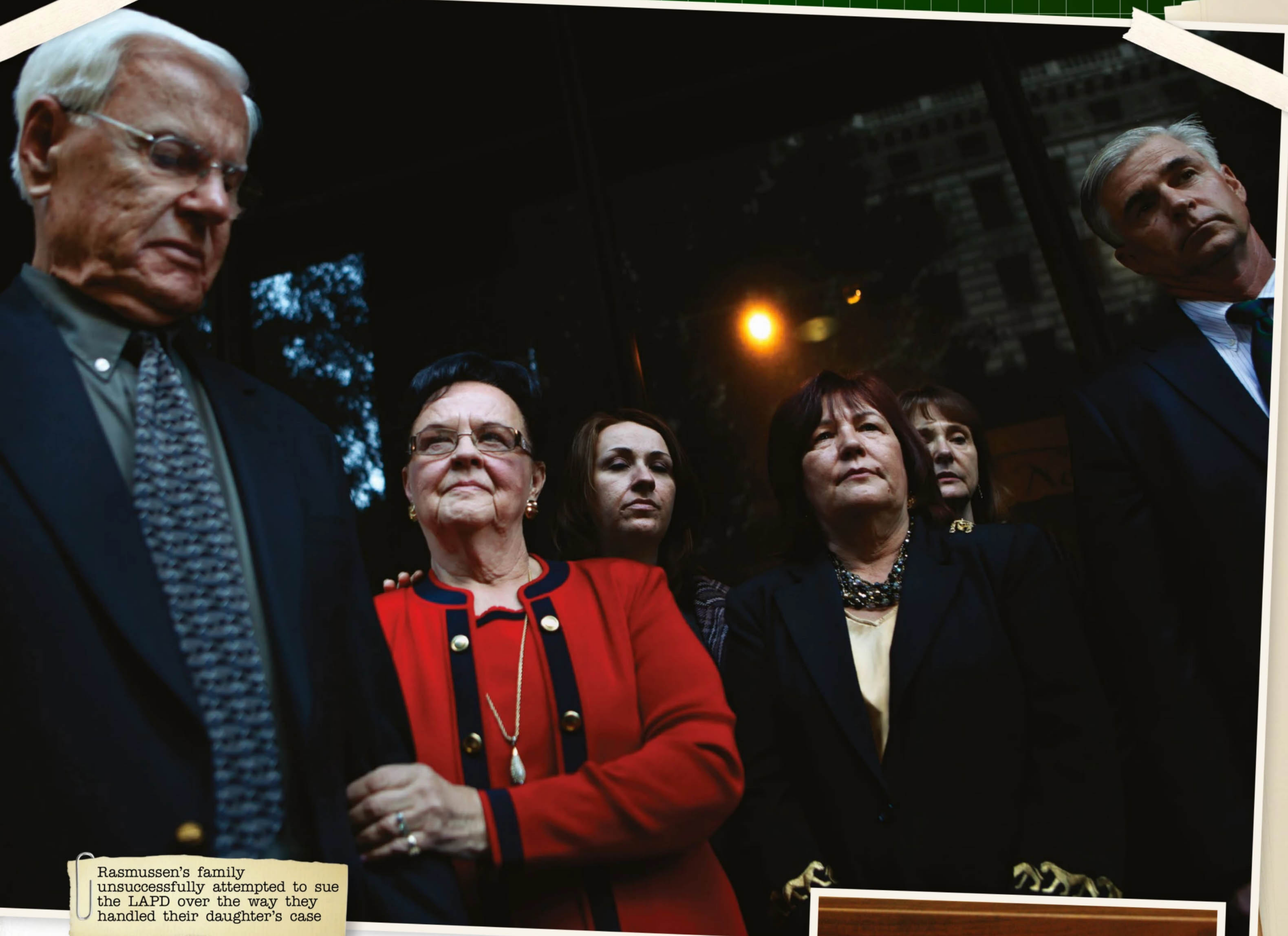
A week later, the BMW was found parked in a nearby street. A spot of blood, a strand of brown hair and fingerprints were discovered in the vehicle. Rasmussen's father begged officers to conduct DNA testing on the samples, but he was told the tests were both expensive and, in order to do so, there must be a suspect. As there wasn't one, the case went cold.

## BREAKTHROUGH

Rasmussen's case caught the attention of criminalist Jennifer Francis three years after the opening of the Cold Case Homicide Unit by the LAPD in 2001. The coroner's freezer was searched by hand when swabs of DNA from the bite mark that had been detailed in the report were found to be missing. There, a moisture-soiled envelope was found marked 'Rasmussen', as opposed to a file number as evidence normally was. Inside was a screw cap tube containing two swabs. Tests on these samples finally determined the gender of the killer as female. Mayer had retired some years earlier and details of the interviews with Rasmussen's father urging officers to look at Detective Lazarus hadn't been recorded, nor had any other interviews that mentioned her. Detectives speculated about the possibility that one of the two burglars was female. However, again with no concrete suspects, the evidence was returned to storage.

In 2009, Van Nuys Homicide Detective Jim Nuttall pulled a progress report on the case. Francis's contradiction of Mayer's original theory that the suspected killers were male caused him to show it to his supervisor Detective Robert Bub, who assigned detectives Marc Martinez and Pete Barba to rework the case. A re-enactment of the attack suggested that an armed intruder had targeted Rasmussen. They had fired a shot and missed, shattering the glass upstairs.





Rasmussen's family unsuccessfully attempted to sue the LAPD over the way they handled their daughter's case

Rasmussen had run downstairs to activate the panic alarm and the killer had tried to stop her, resulting in a violent fracas. When Rasmussen wrestled the gun from her attacker and placed her in a headlock, the assailant bit her, hit her over the head with a vase and fired a fatal shot. The final two shots were then delivered through the muffled sound of the blanket.

A note in the progress report showed that in 1987, a statement from Rasmussen's husband had confirmed that Lazarus was a former girlfriend, with the initials 'PO' scribbled next to her name. Guessing that this stood for 'police officer', the name was put into the department database. When her details emerged, detectives phoned Rasmussen's father who explained his suspicions of Lazarus once again. Investigations determined that the officer had been off duty on the day of the murder almost 23 years ago. She had reported her

back-up .38-calibre Smith and Wesson gun as stolen just weeks later. Undercover police acquired DNA from a discarded drinks straw belonging to Lazarus. Tests confirmed that the mouth on that straw had bitten Rasmussen 23 years ago.

### AFTERMATH

In March 2012, 56-year-old Stephanie Lazarus was found guilty of first-degree murder. She received 27 years to life imprisonment for the murder as well as an additional two years for the personal use of a firearm. Lazarus's defence attorney filed an appeal arguing an unfair trial and that evidence in some cases was circumstantial, such as the similarities between the murder weapon and the defendant's replacement .38-calibre gun. However, California's Second District Court of Appeal denied this appeal in July 2015.



LAPD Detective Stephanie Lazarus pleaded not guilty to a jury of eight women and four men for murdering Sherri



## UNSOLVED CASE

# WHO KILLED BILLIE-JO?

WHEN BILLIE-JO JENKINS WAS FOSTERED BY A HAPPY, BOISTEROUS FAMILY AND MOVED TO A BEAUTIFUL HOME IN HASTINGS, IT LOOKED LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE FOR THE YOUNG GIRL. UNFORTUNATELY, IT WOULD END IN A BLOODY NIGHTMARE

WORDS JOANNA ELPHICK

The building that stands at 48 Lower Park Road is an extremely attractive three-storey, six-bedroomed semi-detached house overlooking the beautiful Alexandra Park in Hastings, England, and it was here that Sion Jenkins decided to relocate his family on 19 August 1992. Yet within just three hours of settling in, their new home was burgled, the front door kicked in and the television stolen. Unfortunately, this was just the start of their tragic move to the south coast. Within five years Sion's foster daughter, Billie-Jo, would be bludgeoned to death and he would be convicted of her horrific murder before undergoing two further appeals and trials.

Billie-Jo was eight years old when the Jenkins family decided to foster her. Her biological mother, Debbie Wood, had been jailed for credit card fraud while her father, Bill Jenkins, spent several spells in prison for a variety of violent offences. Her early childhood was therefore a turbulent one, shuttled between her mum (when she was around); her grandmother; her auntie, Margaret Coster – who would later attack Sion Jenkins on the steps of the Old Bailey – and various foster carers.

In a last desperate bid to avoid placing Billie-Jo back into a children's home, Newham Social Services advertised in a local newspaper for a foster family. It was the Jenkins family (the shared surname was purely a coincidence) who answered the advert and offered a home to the unhappy girl. The move to Hastings was supposed to be a fresh start for the newly enlarged family, but it proved to be nothing short of a monumental catastrophe.



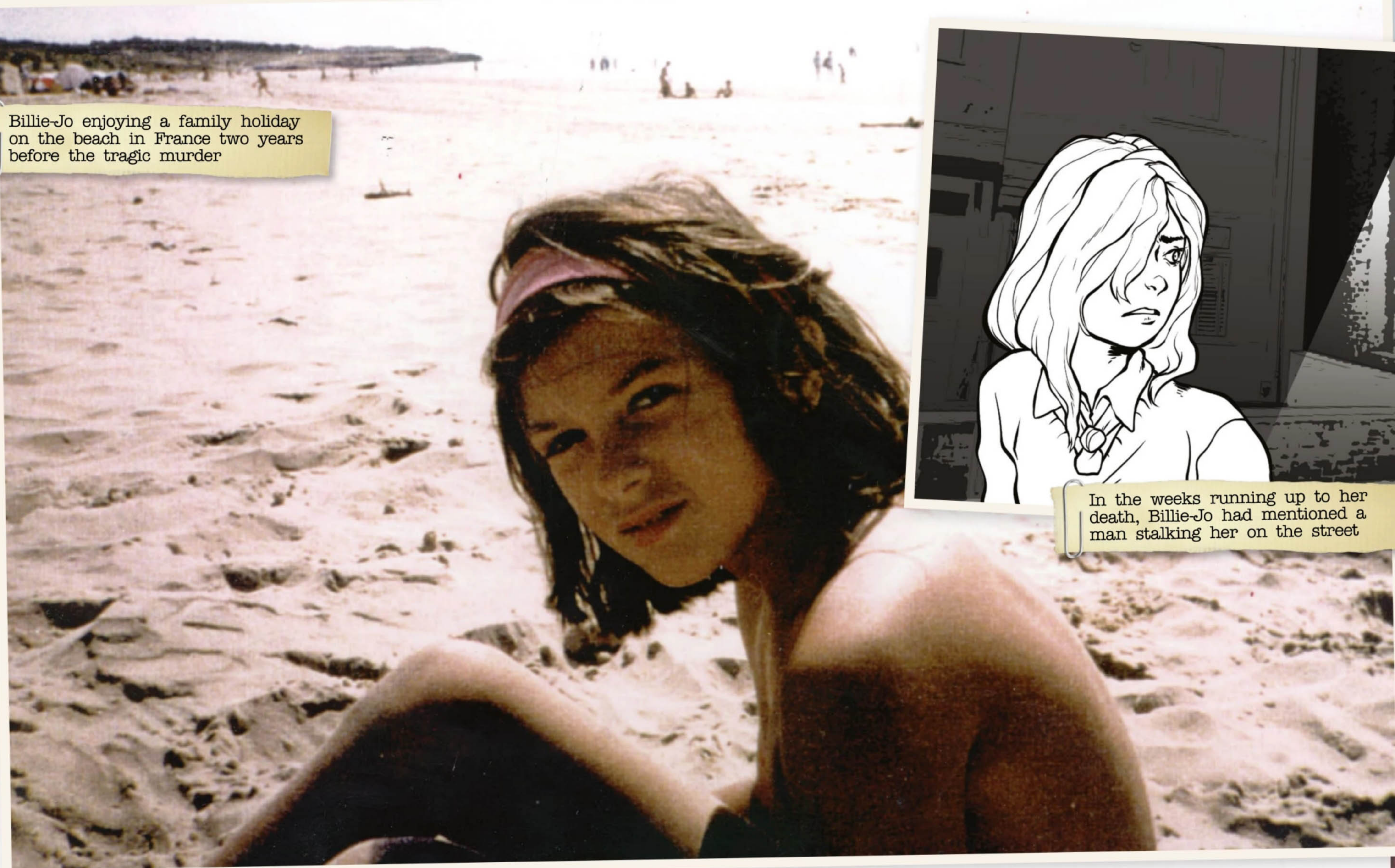
48 Lower Park Road, Hastings, where Billie-Jo was fostered by the Jenkins family in order to start a new life







Billie-Jo enjoying a family holiday on the beach in France two years before the tragic murder



In the weeks running up to her death, Billie-Jo had mentioned a man stalking her on the street

Charlotte, Esther and Maya bickered and fought like any other siblings but it wasn't too long before the children settled down and accepted Billie-Jo as one of their own. She was the first of the girls to attend Helenswood Secondary School and she quickly found her way, making close friends. Sion Jenkins became deputy head of William Parker School, a fact that would work against him at the trial since it became apparent that he had lied during his job interview and on his fanciful CV. The prosecution leapt upon this information, using it to undermine his credibility. By December, 1996, Billie-Jo was taken out of care and Sion and Lois Jenkins were granted a Residency Order for her. She was no longer a foster child and for the first time ever, felt a certain sense of security. Sadly, it would not last.

### BREAK-INS AND PROWLERS

Meanwhile, the house turned out not to be the dream home they had first thought it to be. Numerous attempted break-ins and property damage left Lois and the girls feeling vulnerable. The house next door had been bought by Orbit, a local housing association, and had been left empty for some time. This quickly attracted squatters looking for somewhere to crash. Prowlers had been spotted sneaking through their side gate to avoid the road and cross the allotments at the back of their property.

Neighbours also reported to the police that they had seen a man staring through the front windows of their home. The incidents intensified a few weeks before the murder with a number of silent phone calls and the side gate being repeatedly found swinging open. Padlocks were bought, security lights fitted and a new addition to the family, Buster the Staffordshire bull terrier, was welcomed into the fold.

Billie-Jo had been particularly unnerved by these events, a fact that was raised at the third trial when Ruth Bristow, her best friend, recounted a phone conversation where Billie-Jo had begged her to come over because she didn't want to be in the house on her own. At the time, neither Sion or Lois were aware of the children's fears, believing that they had shielded them from the very real threat of a potential home invasion.

Saturday 15 February started like any other weekend morning, a noisy family home filled with giggling girls and a barking dog. It was typically hectic with lots of chores to be completed before the end of the day, but it was a beautiful sunny morning and the start of the weekend, so nobody complained. Billie-Jo and Annie were particularly keen to get on with the jobs at hand since they had both spotted some trainers they wanted and had been told that if the work was carried out properly, they could earn extra pocket money and pick up the shoes in the afternoon. The girls each chose a task and Billie-Jo rang Ruth in order to arrange a time to meet up and go shopping. They agreed to see each other at four o'clock that afternoon in town.

And so the day began. Lottie went to the cinema with her best friend and another parent to watch *Toy Story*. Billie-Jo took Buster for a walk across Alexandra Park and Lois took the remaining children to the supermarket. Sion, meanwhile, went to the local garage to pick up his car. Everything seemed remarkably normal and nobody could possibly have foreseen the tragedy that lay just around the corner.

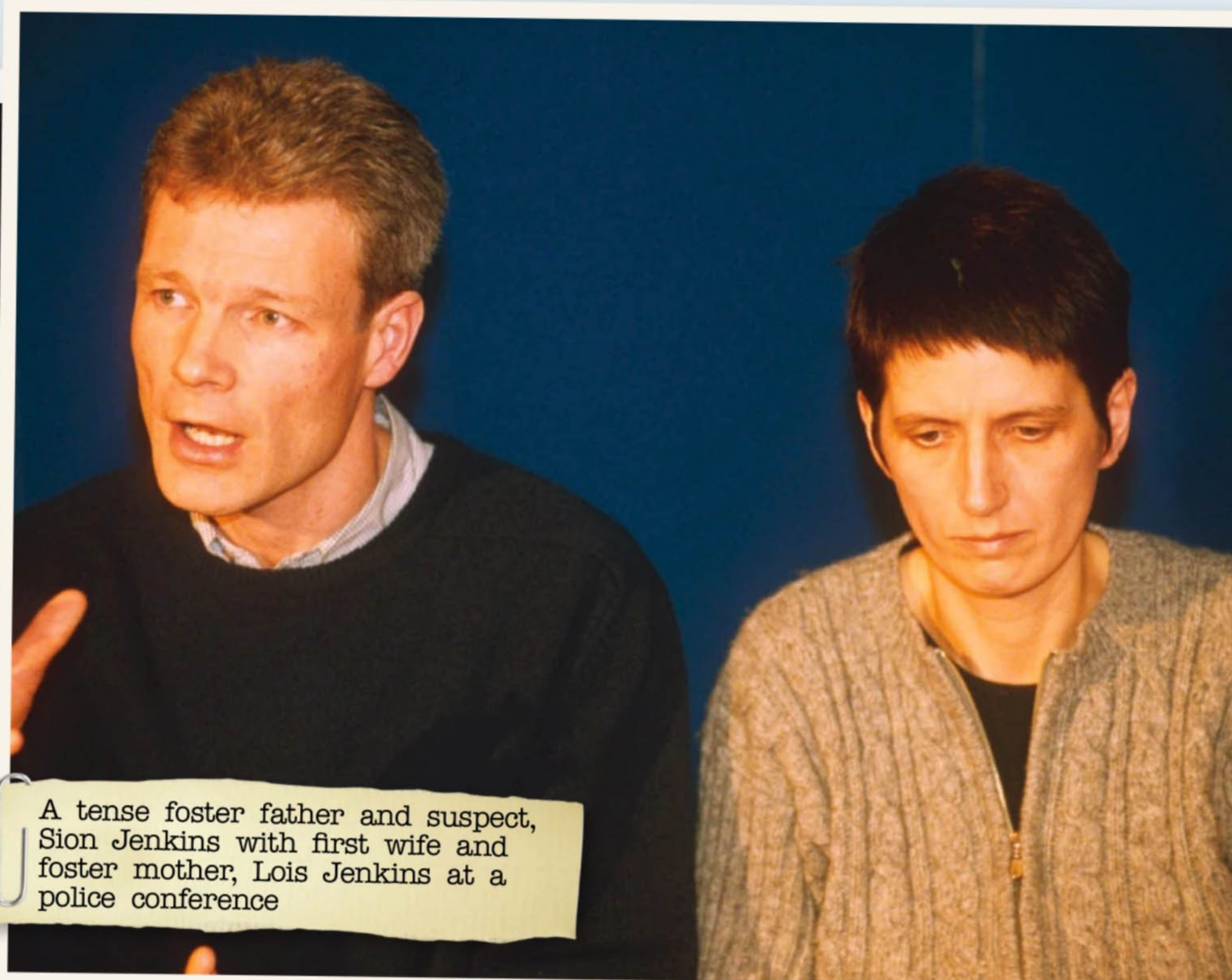
**RIGHT** Debbie Wood and Bill Jenkins, the biological parents of Billie-Jo, believed their daughter was going to live in a safer, happier environment

**“EVERYTHING SEEMED NORMAL AND NOBODY COULD HAVE FORESEEN THE TRAGEDY THAT LAY AROUND THE CORNER”**





A tense foster father and suspect, Sion Jenkins with first wife and foster mother, Lois Jenkins at a police conference



At three o'clock, Sion took Annie to pick up Lottie who had left the cinema and was now at a music lesson. Lois had taken Esther and Maya out for the afternoon. In one fateful decision, they had chosen to take Buster with them, leaving Billie-Jo alone in the house painting the patio doors.

The following movements of Sion Jenkins were thrashed out in court over and over again since his actions appeared erratic and unnecessarily time-consuming. He arrived home shortly after 3.15pm in order for Lottie to drop off her clarinet and start her own chores. Annie was to take over from Billie-Jo on the patio. Sion suddenly decided that she would need white spirit to complete the job and the children were duly bundled back into the car. At the trial, the prosecution raised the point that this was a very odd decision since the police found a large quantity of white spirit stored in the house. There was clearly no need for any more. There was, the prosecution claimed, a short gap in time when the children were out at the front of the house and Sion was alone with Billie-Jo. Enough time, they felt, to lose his temper, bludgeon her to death and recover himself before fleeing the scene.

Just as they reached the DIY store, Sion changed his mind saying that Annie could do the painting tomorrow. He started back home, but on reaching the house claimed to have seen Annie's disappointment and turned, once again, back towards the shop. On reaching the store, Sion discovered that he had forgotten his wallet and could not buy the spirit. They then made their way back to the house for the last time.

### BLOODBATH ON THE PATIO

It was ten-year-old Lottie who found Billie-Jo, lying in a pool of blood on the patio, her head turned away from the house, her eyes looking sightlessly out across the garden. The scene was one of total carnage. By this time, Annie had come to see what had caused her little sister to cry out and the pair were ushered out of the doorway into the playroom where Sion shut the door.

At this point, Sion claimed to have returned to Billie-Jo in order to assess the extent of her injuries. He told police that, 'when I pulled her towards me, there was a squelching sound.' He then rang for an ambulance. The call to the emergency services was timed at 3.38pm. He then phoned Denise Lancaster, a nearby neighbour and best friend of Lois



Billie-Jo was left alone painting the patio doors. The murderer could have crept up behind her undetected



who attempted to stem the flow of blood by wrapping a towel around her head. It was at this moment the severity of her injuries were fully realised. Her skull had been completely caved in and her brain was exposed. The forehead was misshapen. Denise insisted the emergency services were called again since the ambulance had not yet appeared.

By 3.55pm the ambulance and police had arrived. Police constables Christopher Bruce and David Morgan looked on in horror as Billie-Jo was rolled over, exposing jagged fragments of skull protruding from the gaping wound.

A bloodied metal bar, first thought to be a crowbar, lay next to the body on a bin liner. It was later identified as an 18-inch tent peg left out by Annie as she cleared out the utility room and coal bunker. It was clearly the murder weapon.

Sion, meanwhile, left the house and briefly sat in his car before leaping out again. At the trial he stated that he had been in total shock and was unaware of what he was doing. Prosecution took a rather more cynical view, suggesting that it explained away any blood that might have been discovered in the car.

Denise and Sion went back to the children where Lottie was worrying about prowlers once again. She would later give evidence that 'when we left, the side gate was shut. When we got back, the side gate was open.'

Just after four o'clock, Lois rang to suggest the Sion should meet her and the girls at a nearby pub where they could all have tea. Sion told her to get home as quickly as possible because there had been a terrible accident. When they were all together, Sion told his family that the paramedics had not been able to save her.

At 4.50pm, Dr Joseph Ludwig, the police surgeon, pronounced young Billie-Jo dead. In a later press release he stated, "I have twenty-six years' experience as a police surgeon, and this was without a doubt the saddest and most brutal murder I have ever attended".

## SO, WHAT NOW?

The Jenkins family were obviously in shock, but at some point Lois realised she needed to find somewhere for them all to stay. The children were ushered back to the home of nearby friends, Julia and Peter Gaimster, and quickly put to bed. Lois and Sion remained behind to give statements and collect their things. However, by 10.30pm that evening, the pair were dropped off with their children. Peter Gaimster noticed that Lois wanted to talk things through, while Sion wanted to be left alone. Within nine days he would be arrested for Billie-Jo's murder, but for the time being he was considered a grieving father figure, trying to support his remaining family, holding them together.

The following day Annie and Lottie were taken to the Old Courthouse in Battle to undergo video interviews. Lottie fixated upon the open side gate, reiterating the point a number of times. Annie, on the other hand, could not remember anything of significance relating to the gate. The most important aspect of the interview concerned the time that Sion was left alone in the house with Billie-Jo. The police already had their suspicions. However, Annie's answer suggested very little opportunity to commit murder since she claimed her Dad was in there for, 'a few minutes – about two minutes, one minute.' So, who killed Billie-Jo, a local prowler or her own foster father? The race was on to catch a monstrous child-killer.



## CLUE PLASTIC BAG

Billie-Jo had fallen onto a plastic bin liner. One corner of the plastic had been stuffed up into her left nostril. When Denise Lancaster removed it, blood began to flow freely from the nose.



**RIGHT** Officers at the scene of the crime bag up evidence, including the murder weapon and clothing, and remove it from the family home



# ALONE WITH BILLIE-JO

BILLIE-JO'S BODY WAS DISCOVERED BY SION, HER FOSTER FATHER AND HER TWO FOSTER SISTERS, ANNIE AND CHARLOTTE. THE SCENE WAS ONE OF TOTAL CARNAGE

## WITNESS DENISE LANCASTER

Lois' best friend lived a few doors down from the Jenkins family home and arrived at the scene minutes after the discovery of Billie-Jo's body when Sion Jenkins telephoned her for help. She moved the body by the shoulder but was never covered in the fine blood spray later discovered on Sion's clothing.

## VICTIM BODY POSITION

Billie-Jo's body was discovered lying prone, flat on her back on the patio floor. The left-hand-side of her face was on the floor facing the garden. Her nostril was NOT tilted at an unusual angle.

## CLUE BLOOD SPATTER

Large wet spots of blood were spattered across the French windows where Billie-Jo had been painting. Unlike the backwards trajectory of the 'blood mist', these spots of blood would have been thrown forwards.

## CLUE BLOCKED LUNGS

The lungs were hyper-inflated. Later, during the autopsy, it would be revealed that blood had blocked the air passages leading into the lungs and this had prevented any exhalation from occurring.

## CLUE FINE BLOOD SPRAY

A fine spray of blood was seen covering Billie-Jo's leggings. This was a vital clue since a similar mist of blood was discovered upon Sion Jenkin's jacket but not anyone else who subsequently touched the body.

## ! EVENT HEAD INJURY

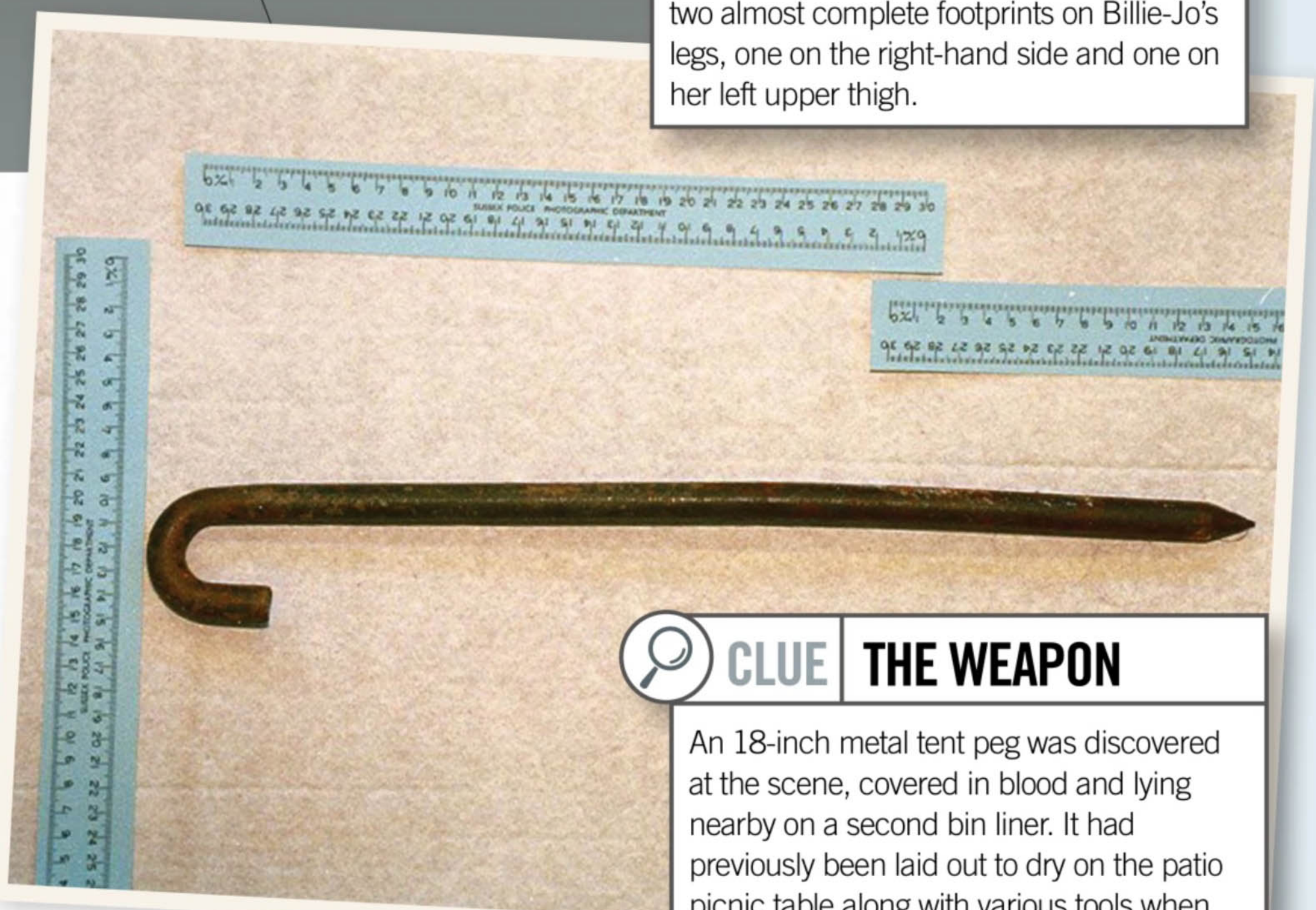
Billie-Jo's head had received repeated blows, resulting in a shattered skull. Brain matter and bone fragments were visible upon her face.

## CLUE THE FOOTPRINTS

As the body was turned over, ambulance crewman Christopher Burton discovered two almost complete footprints on Billie-Jo's legs, one on the right-hand side and one on her left upper thigh.

# THE BENTOVIM REPORT

On 17 March, Sussex police visited Dr Arnon Bentovim, a leading child and adolescent psychiatrist and his wife, Marianne, a family therapist social worker. The pair were asked to produce a report on the family background to the Billie-Jo Jenkins case and ultimately, recommend a course of action. It was to be a damning document, along with Lois' own reports of domestic violence, that would cause untold damage to the defence of Sion Jenkins. Claims of potential sexual relations between Sion and his foster child were raised, along with a further affair with a minor, and they concluded that 'his capacity to give adequate care to the children was limited'. However, it must be noted that there were gaping holes and many mistakes in the report which greatly undermines its validity and reliability as actual 'evidence'.



## CLUE THE WEAPON

An 18-inch metal tent peg was discovered at the scene, covered in blood and lying nearby on a second bin liner. It had previously been laid out to dry on the patio picnic table along with various tools when rainwater was found to have soaked into the contents of Sion's tool box.



# THE INVESTIGATION

WITHIN FOUR DAYS OF THE MURDER, TWO MEN WERE BRIEFLY ARRESTED AND THEN RELEASED BEFORE SION JENKINS WAS FINALLY ARRESTED ON THE 24 FEBRUARY

Sion Jenkins denied laying a finger on Billie-Jo, but the evidence was stacked against him and the police were convinced that they had their man. He was convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment on 2 July 1998.

The Crown asserted that the 158 microscopic blood spots discovered on Jenkin's jacket had been sprayed across him as he repeatedly struck her with the tent peg and this, along with his bizarre behaviour on the morning in question, was the key evidence that initially convicted him. Forensic science was central to the trial but was it flawed? Defence claimed that the blood had transferred over to Jenkins as he moved his daughter's shoulder. This failed to impress the jury, since no such blood stains could be found on the ambulance crew and Denise Lancaster – and they, too, had moved the body.

At the retrial in 2005, it was suggested by Professor David Denison that blood could have come from minute amounts of air escaping through a tiny hole in Billie-Jo's nose, which had been blocked with blood. It was further argued by forensic expert, Mr McKirdy, that the blood found on Jenkins' clothes was too uniform to have been created during an attack.

On 15 June 2004, scientists examined slides of Billie-Jo's lungs at the Royal Brompton Hospital. They made the startling discovery

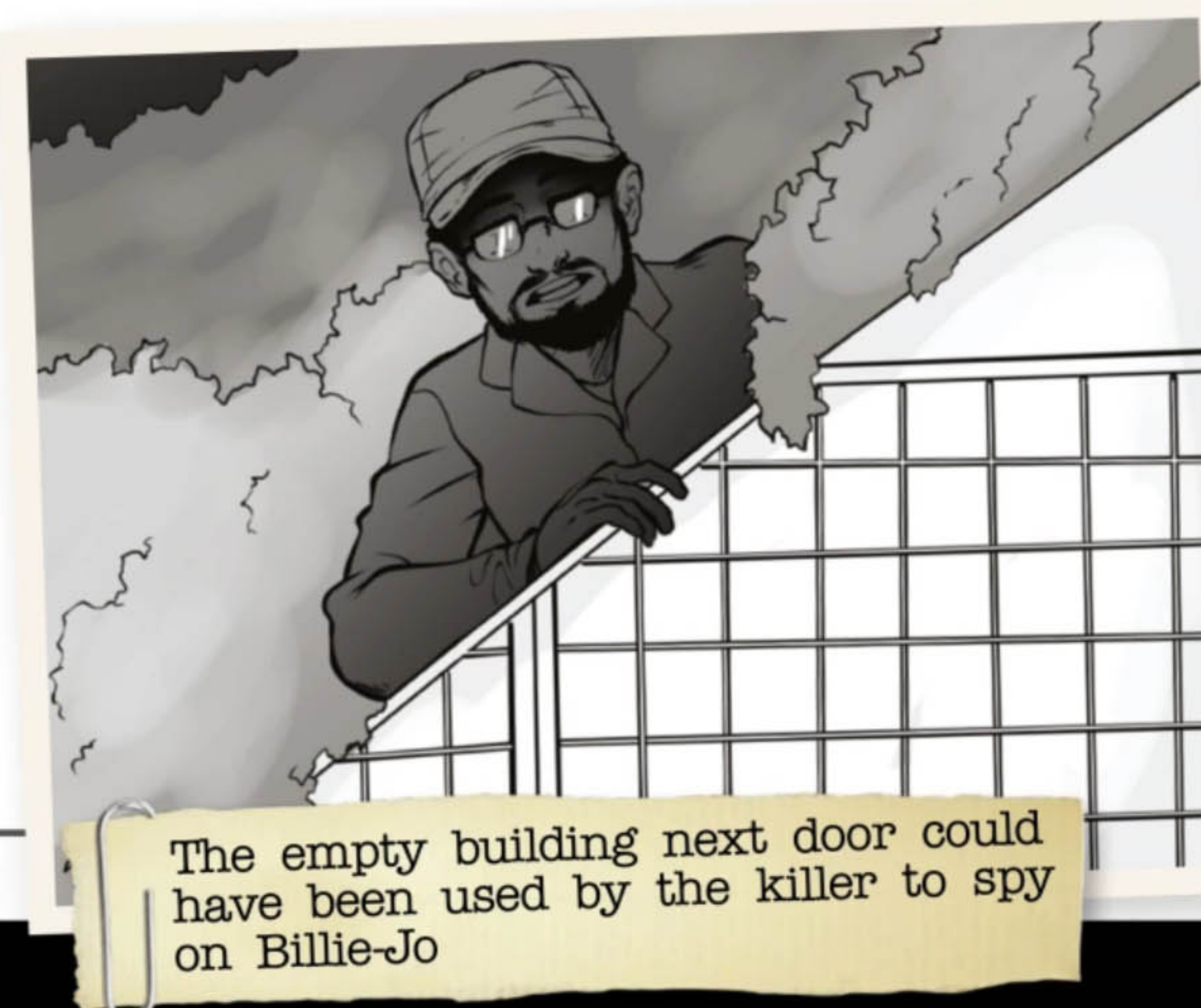
that she had suffered pulmonary interstitial emphysema. Could this have affected the blood spatter evidence in any way? It was also confirmed that expired blood could mimic high velocity spatter. At this point his second appeal was successful, the conviction quashed and a retrial ordered.

After the retrial in 2005, Lois' statements made to the Court of Appeal the previous year but never heard, were given to the press. In it she alleged that she had suffered years of domestic violence at the hands of Jenkins. The jury were confused and bewildered. Forensic evidence was conflicting, the children's statements did not match and had been produced and later retracted by Lois Jenkins and ultimately, there was nothing in the way of irrefutable proof.

Lois' later statements described a monster. 'When he lost his temper we never argued' she claimed, 'he would just lose it, snap and in a few moments he would be back to normal'. Is this what had happened on that fateful day when Billie-Jo lost her life? Did Sion Jenkins 'snap' when he saw his foster daughter and then coldly calm down in a matter of minutes before taking his own children out to the DIY store, or was the open side gate evidence of a violent intruder? Did the escalating silent phone

calls and shadowy figures from across the park inevitably lead to this moment? It was, of course, impossible to tell.

By 8 July 2005, the jurors declared that a unanimous verdict could not be reached, so Justice Rafferty gave the majority direction. This meant that she would accept the verdict of ten jurors rather than wait for all 12 to agree. At 2.50pm on 11 July they all filed back into court – without a majority verdict. Not even ten jurors could come together. The court was dismissed, prosecution called for a further retrial and it began eight weeks later on 31 October. This, too, ended with a majority direction from the new judge, Justice David Clarke, who received the news that the jury was, in fact, 'hung'. The prosecution had no plan to call a fourth trial and the judge directed that Not Guilty should be entered against Sion Jenkins' name.



## THE OTHER SUSPECTS

AFTER SION JENKINS' NAME WAS CLEARED, WHO ELSE MIGHT HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HORRIFIC AND BRUTAL MURDER OF BILLIE-JO JENKINS? THERE WERE THREE POSSIBLE SUSPECTS

### PLASTIC BAG OBSESSIVE

Mark Lynam was a chronic paranoid schizophrenic who had been spotted in the area across the day of the murder. He was easily recognised because of a prominent facial scar. As one witness described it, 'it was pink and vivid, not a new scar, and went from his forehead down towards his left cheek'. The hunt was on for 'Scarface', but was he, in fact, Billie-Jo's killer? His weird obsession with plastic bags certainly linked him to the piece of bin liner that was discovered at the scene but he had no previous history of violence.

### A NEIGHBOUR

Felix Simmons lived nearby in Lower Park Road where he had previously suffered a nervous breakdown. He was named by Lois Jenkins as a likely suspect and brought in by police on 19 February, four days after Billie-Jo's murder. He was known by the police to have a violent temper and although his wife gave him an alibi on the day in question, he was still brought in for questioning when police noticed that his clothes were splashed with what appeared to be white paint. The paint was not a match to that used by Billie-Jo and he was subsequently released.

### LOCAL SEX OFFENDER

The latest named suspect is Antoni Imiela, a violent criminal who served 14 years for robbing a post office, and a serial rapist, who grew up in County Durham in Northeast England. He is currently serving seven life sentences for a series of sex attacks around the M25. At the time of the murder, he lived 20 miles away and was friendly with several local residents. His M.O. included using improvised weapons found at the scene and was known to target young girls. During a previous attack, he placed a bin liner over his victim's head.





**ABOVE** A trial drawing of lead suspect Sion Jenkins as he stands in the dock. Irate family members call out from the viewing gallery



Forensics circled the tiny spots of Billie-Jo's blood that they found on Sion Jenkins' shoe

## THE AFTERMATH

### WHAT HAPPENED AFTER SION'S RELEASE?

Nine years after the murder of Billie-Jo, on 9 February 2006, Sion Jenkins was a free man – but the media was not convinced of his innocence. The tabloid press released a tirade of condemnation at the justice system, with *The Sun* stating 'You're a child killer... everyone knows it', while *The Daily Telegraph* called, 'Still No Justice For Billie-Jo'.

Jenkins, meanwhile, sought damages of up to £500,000 for the time he spent in jail, presumably hoping to clear his name within the media as he had in court. But the plan monumentally backfired. Compensation was denied by the Ministry of Justice, who explained that the applicant must be shown to be "clearly innocent". Any chance of Jenkins rebuilding his reputation was dashed by this damning statement. A cloud of doubt will inevitably hang over him unless new and compelling evidence comes to light. Will the police continue to search for suspects or do they truly believe they already had their man but he slipped through their fingers? If this is the case, the chance of bringing closure to this tragic crime is extraordinarily slim.

Most initial suspects were quickly disregarded by investigating officers at the time, but two potential characters are still viable. The first is an unknown man Billie-Jo frequently mentioned in the weeks leading up to her death. She had complained to her parents, sisters and close friends that she had noticed a dark-haired man in a smart, leather jacket, watching her from across the park.

Interestingly, Sion Jenkins had mentioned a smartly dressed plain clothed police officer in his home on the day of the murder. He claimed that this was the first officer he spoke to but he left and the uniformed police took over. Sussex Police have stated that there was no plain clothes officer present, so who was this man? Could he have actually been the killer waiting for an opportunity to leave the house or was he a ruse conjured up by a cornered murderer? Who knows.

The second suspect, Antoni Imiela, was suggested by Billie-Jo's family in 2012. The M25 RapiD, who lived quite close by was known to wear a smart leather jacket similar to that described by Billie-Jo. A discarded tent peg, left on a nearby picnic table would be exactly the sort of thing this sex offender would have used. Sadly, the killer's identity is unlikely to be found any time soon, particularly if police believe that they already know who the murderer is.

On 19 January 2008, a memorial seat made from a nearby oak tree was dedicated to the memory of Billie-Jo and placed in Alexandra Park opposite her home. The beautifully crafted bench hasn't weathered the last decade too well. It is inscribed with the words, 'side by side or miles apart, friends are close to the heart' – a fitting tribute to a much-loved and sorely missed sister, daughter and friend.

**“ A CLOUD OF DOUBT WILL INEVITABLY HANG OVER SION UNLESS NEW AND COMPELLING EVIDENCE COMES TO LIGHT ”**



## BRIEFING

# THE ARYAN BROTHERHOOD

THEY MAKE UP OF 0.1 PER CENT OF INMATES, BUT THIS GANG ACCOUNT FOR 30 PER CENT OF ALL MURDERS IN A PRISON SYSTEM STILL DIVIDED ALONG ETHNIC LINES

WORDS SETH FERRANTI

**T**he Aryan Brotherhood formed at San Quentin prison in the California Department of Corrections in 1967 to protect white convicts from the predatory gangs that were taking root in the system. It was a volatile time in the United States and this volatility was amplified a hundred times over in the man-made netherworld of chaos and violence. It was go hard or check into the hole like a punk.

“What really got them originated was the white boys had to come together for protection purposes. The blacks were acting like they ran shit, so the white boys got together to say you can run it, but you ain’t running us,” says Dog, a penitentiary veteran and long time AB associate. “They formed to take care of the whites in the California system because of the black prison gangs. It was a way for them to make money - a protection racket.”

The white supremacist group, which later adopted the moniker ‘The Brand’ due to the shamrock tattoo they used to signify membership, was made up mostly of prisoners with Irish, Scandinavian and German backgrounds. Convicts from 1950s biker gangs like the Diamond Tooth and Bluebirds formed the crux of the newly formed organisation. The Caucasian inmates consolidated under a neo-Nazi banner to watch each other’s backs, show unity and handle their business on the yard. They were representing for the white race and making sure that no white inmates were exploited on their watch. By 1975, the gang was prospering inside the fences of the CDC, making power moves, calling shots and protecting their own.

“In the beginning, the AB had one true purpose, to stop blacks and Mexicans from abusing whites. If you weren’t picked up by the AB, you were dead,” says an old-timer, who has done stints in both California and federal prison says. “The mentality back then was ‘kill whitey.’”

The 1960s were a radical time in America, with the black power movement in full swing and minorities marching for civil rights. Behind the walls of the CDC, where blacks, whites and Mexicans were crammed together like sardines, racial tensions were definitely over the top.

George Jackson, who legend holds formed the Black Guerrilla Family, wrote the celebrated prison memoir

*Soledad Brother*. In his book he describes instances where black inmates would attack whites on the tier just because of the colour of their skin. The former Black Panther had an unhealthy hatred of the system and all things white. In the depths of America’s gulags black prison gangs were making a power move.

With the Black Panthers holding iconic status in the urban centres in the radical 60s, that mentality spilled over into the prisons, where race wars raged on unabated. The cauldron of hate created an atmosphere of tension at San Quentin, evolving into an all out melee that erupted across the whole Californian system. The end result was the rise of the big four prison gangs, divided along strict racial lines, which provided a measure of safety for their members. Another author, Edward Bunker, a con who went Hollywood when he got out (both as an actor and screenwriter, famously appearing as Mr Blue in *Reservoir Dogs*), wrote about life in the CDC in his book, *Education of a Felon*, which documented how whites came together to hold their own.

## BLOOD IN. BLOOD OUT

Along with the other race-based gangs, the Brand took their place in prison legend and lore as one of the fiercest and most violent gangs to ever grace a California mainline. But the Aryan Brotherhood wasn’t for everyone. Exclusivity was the rule. They were very selective in who they let join, choosing prospective members with a great deal of scrutiny. “You can’t sign up for the Brand,” Dog says. “They have to pick you.”

The Brand’s motto was “Blood in, blood out,” meaning once you spilled blood in order to join, the only way you were leaving was in a body bag. And if you wanted to join, all you had to do was to kill, or attempt to kill, a black or Mexican inmate. The AB offered an exclusive membership to only the most violent, cunning and loyal convicts. The elite of the white race, as they saw it.

**RIGHT** A former member of the Aryan Brotherhood in Calipatria State Prison, California. Around half a century on from their foundation, the Brand are still a force within the prison system.



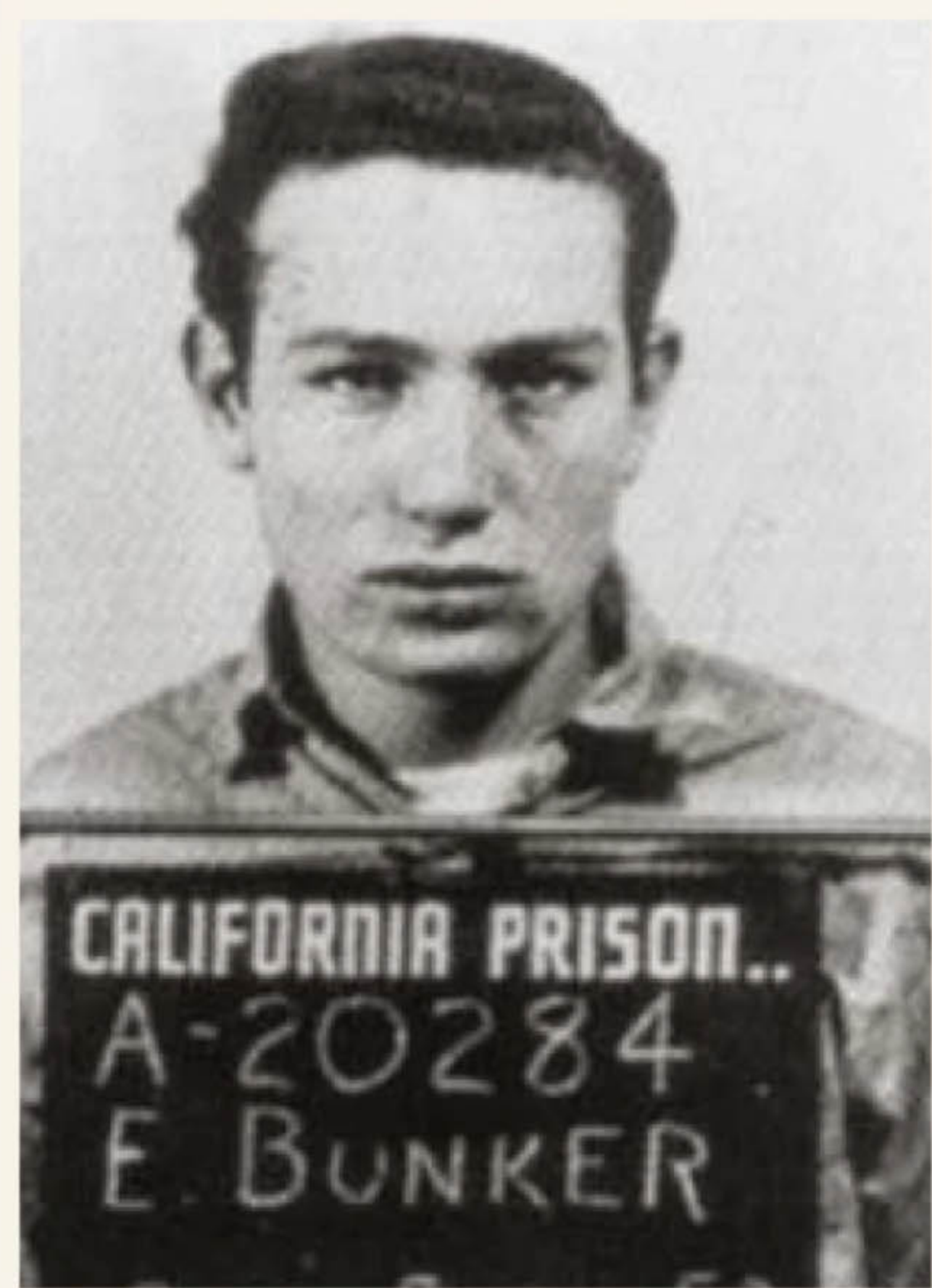








**ABOVE** Members of the Aryan Brotherhood show off their tattoos. The organisation's long history has led to them adopting a variety of motifs, including the Viking warrior on the inmate first from the right.

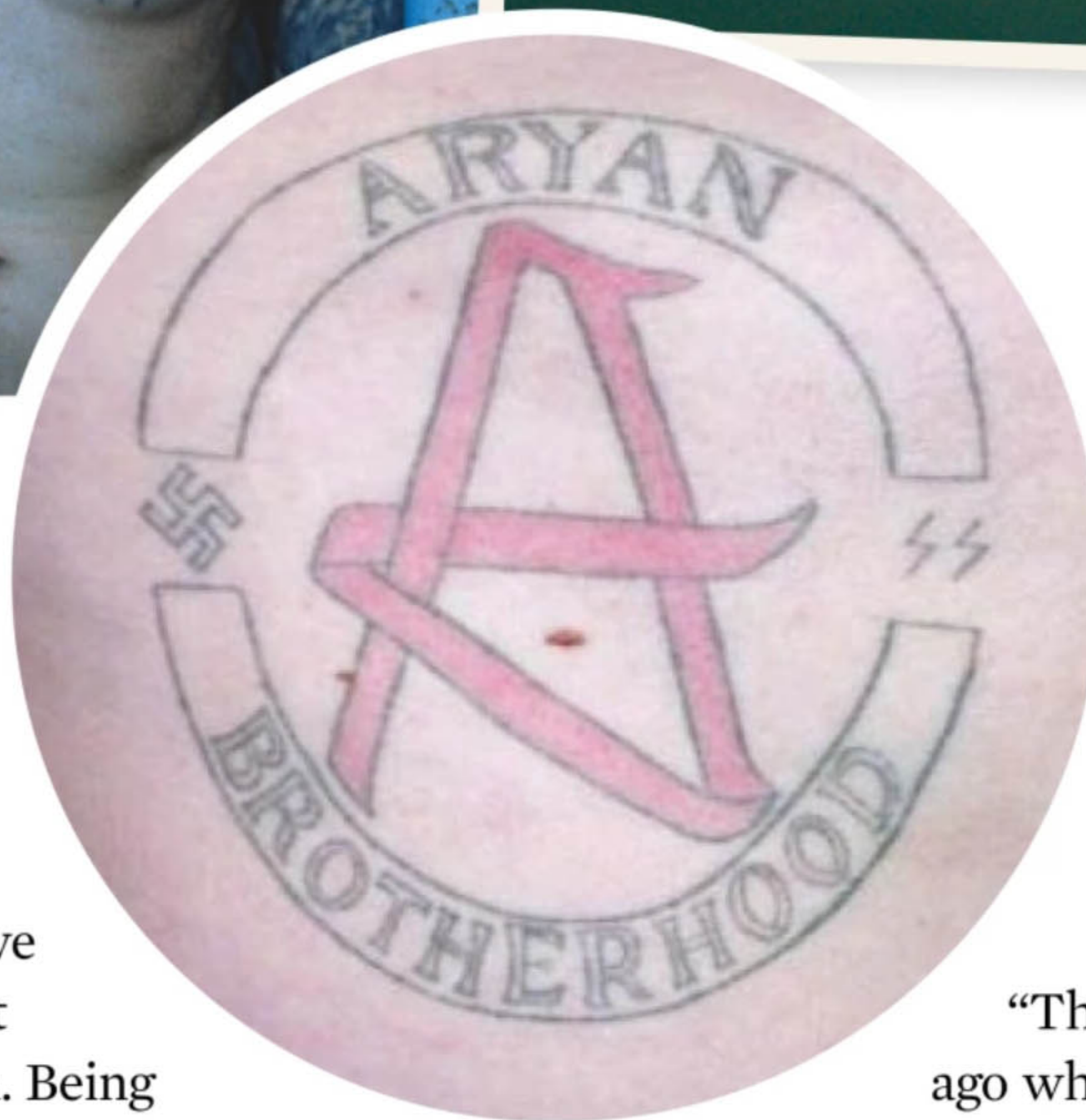


**ABOVE** Con-turned-author Edward Bunker detailed the early days of the Brand in his prison memoir *Education of a Felon*.

"You have to kill a black to get in. Blood in, blood out. There's nothing wrong with that in my mind. We believe in being separatists," Dog says. "We got freedom of speech, freedom of religion. Being a separatist is a form of religion. It's like them old bylaws - blacks can't eat here. ABs do time the way we want. We get high when we want to get high. We drink when we want to drink and we fight and kill when we want to fight and kill."

The Aryan Brotherhood believed themselves to be a brotherhood of soldiers on the front lines of the prison race wars. They conditioned their bodies, minds and souls to go full blast at a moment's notice. A law enforcement official likened them to special forces, saying, "The AB is the most lethal killer this country has produced outside of Delta Force. With their thick bull necks, massive forearms, knit caps pulled low over their eyes and walrus-like moustaches they resemble Viking warriors or Old West outlaws." A fearsome sight indeed. An image cultivated to instil fear in the environment they found themselves in.

"A riot could happen over the smallest thing between races in the California prison system. A misunderstanding that became disrespect could get inmates seriously injured and even killed," says Bumperjack, a long time Aryan Brotherhood member. "I got involved with the Brand in 1985. 30 years ago at Deuel Vocational Institution in Tracy, California. I had to get a green light on a guy who had jumped me in the county jail with two Northern Mexicans and he was the shot caller. They put me in the hospital after I beat him in a hand-to-hand altercation over me not paying rent on a pack of Camel smokes. This hit I made was my



**ABOVE** San Quentin Prison is the birthplace of the Aryan Brotherhood. They formed in the mid-1960s as a result of the clash between black and white inmates in the aftermath of desegregation.

indoctrination into the Brand and I was credited with the initial part of making my bones."

## HARSH REALITY

"The system in California back 30 years ago when I entered was no joke, if you came into the system and had a problem with another inmate you had to get permission from the Brand if you were a white inmate. The prison gangs had control of all the prisons. There were a lot of stabbings and some fistfights," Bumperjack says. "In the California prison system as a white guy you didn't have too many options of who to run with. If you become a race traitor you were a target when the first riot jumped off. If you were white, let's say, in a black gang."

The Aryan Brotherhood has been responsible for organised violence against black inmates in federal penitentiaries at USP Marion in Illinois and USP Lewisburg in Pennsylvania. But despite their racial leanings the AB has become more of a racketeering enterprise over the years. "It's a criminal organisation first and foremost," the law enforcement official said. "The AB has used murder as discipline. They used murder to keep their members in line and to spread fear and terror amongst the prison population." And in the process they became prison celebrities.

A chance to see a real AB put in real work was bigger than watching the Super Bowl for those inside the belly of the beast. And the Brand didn't disappoint, they killed by garrote and bludgeon and prison-made knives. They killed black inmates, white inmates who didn't do what they said and even their own members who got out of line. They were violent, disciplined and fearless – a prison officials' absolute worst nightmare.

"They wouldn't sneak up and stab you," Dog says. "They'd do it right in the open. If a brother told you he was coming to kill you he was coming to kill you. They were not scared of nothing that I ever saw. Lots of killings. Putting hits on baby rapers and snitches. They don't hide from the police - they're doing life sentences. Even if their guy was wrong they ride with him. They don't fight fair. They'll all jump on you. Shit, they're like the Musketeers, all for one and one for all. They

**“WE GET HIGH WHEN WE WANT TO GET HIGH. WE DRINK WHEN WE WANT TO DRINK AND WE FIGHT AND KILL WHEN WE WANT TO FIGHT AND KILL”**



# TATTOOS DECODED

THE ARYAN BROTHERHOOD WEAR THEIR INK WITH PRIDE AND EVERY IMAGE TELLS A STORY



## THE SHAMROCK

The shamrock is the brand that gives them the name they go by in the pen - The Brand. It's said that when Michael 'Big Mac' McElhiney, who had a big shamrock in the middle of his chest, hit USP Leavenworth in the fall of 1994, all he had to do was flash his shamrock and he was handed the keys to the white boy car on the compound.

And if an AB member finds someone fronting with the shamrock tattoo, they will make them cover up the tattoo, burn it off, or even cut it off if that is what it takes. They are very touchy about who wears that tattoo or any other AB insignia like lightning bolts on the underside of the forearms which is another old school indicator of AB membership.



## IRON CROSS

A German military honour discontinued after World War II, the Iron Cross is often used by biker gangs and isn't inherently racist.



## SWASTIKA

The symbol of the German Nazi Party from 1920, the Swastika has been the most potent standard of the far right since 1945.



## 88

The eighth letter of the alphabet in duplicate is code for the Nazi greeting "Heil Hitler." It's often coupled with other significant numbers such as "88/14"



## 14

A reference to the '14 Words' slogan coined by the nationalist leader Daniel Lane: "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White Children."

Depictions of Adolf Hitler, as well as other symbols of the Third Reich, are commonplace within the Brand.



## VALKNUT

Like Thor's hammer, the Valknut symbol - or 'Knot of the Slain Warriors' - is a Norse pagan icon that is also used by some white supremacist groups.



## THOR'S HAMMER

Depictions of Thor's hammer are common in neo-paganism, but it's also a call back to the Nordic mythology favoured by the Nazi Party's inner circle.

“IF YOU BECOME A RACE TRAITOR YOU WERE A TARGET WHEN THE FIRST RIOT JUMPED OFF”



## CRUCIFIED SKINHEAD

Also used by non-racist skinheads, this symbolises sacrifice and can mean prison time served in support of the AB's cause.



## SPIDERWEBS

Spiderweb tattoos on the elbows are a common feature throughout the prison system and represent incarceration - often for murder.



## CELTIC CROSS

A neo-Nazi version of the Celtic cross - this symbol is associated with assorted far right groups, including the white supremacists, the Ku Klux Klan.



## 12

A tattoo of the number 12 represents the first and second letters of the English alphabet: "AB," standing for "Aryan Brotherhood."



## TRISKELE

The three-legged Triskele entered white nationalist lore as the emblem of South Africa's Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB).



got shanks all over the yard. Easy access.” And as the gang expanded into the federal system and other prisons across the nation in the 80s and 90s their reputation preceded them.

The AB’s leaders read Machiavelli, Nietzsche, Sun Tzu, Tolkien and the old standby, *Mein Kampf*. But the AB long ago subordinated its racist ideology to the acquisition of money. “The leadership became much more interested in power than race and started muscling in on the gambling, extortion and dope rackets,” the old-timer says. As part of its bid to exert control over these prison industries, the AB adopted a structure in the 80s similar to the Mafia, with a three-man council and a formal hierarchy that sent orders down the chain of command.

The Brand’s leaders wielded so much control that they effectively served as power brokers in the California system and Federal Bureau of Prisons. Maintaining order and dictating who could walk the mainline and the yard. “Prison is where these guys live. We only punch the clock,” a correctional officer says. “If you are going to spend your life in prison, why not be an AB member? They live like kings.”

## ARYAN EMPIRE

The Brand eventually ran much of the drug trafficking, gambling and prostitution behind the walls, and plenty more on the outside. The gang operated as a fully-fledged criminal enterprise, using murder or the threat of it to enforce their authority. This power was maintained largely by controlling the drug trade. “Selling heroin to fellow convicts generates a lot of money for the Brand,” says the correctional officer. “Several hundred thousand a year from a single prison. And how many yards do they control? You do the math.”

In the federal system they established ties with jailed Mafia crime bosses like Oreste ‘Ernie Boy’ Abbamonte, ‘Little Nicky’ Scarfo and the late John Gotti, the Teflon Don. Associates from other gangs like the Dirty White Boys, Nazi Low Riders and Mexican Mafia do their bidding. They flood every compound they’re on with heroin, shipping

the proceeds back to California to be disbursed between other jailed members and leaders of the gang. The two commissions, one in California and the other in the feds, call the shots. Though never vast in numbers, the AB make up for it with violent acts which have led to a fearsome reputation. Their far-flung associates, who number in the hundreds, exert power in whatever prison compound they are on to further the influence of the gang.

“The state of the Brand in the California system has been letting others do their bidding,” Bumperjack says. “Because they are locked away in Security Housing Units, you can only have control to a certain degree as I see it. In 1989, they built Pelican Bay and in 1988, they built Corcoran to take back control of the California prison system from all the prison gangs. And they didn’t really succeed because the Brand uses others do their bidding on the mainlines. In the feds, they have all the power of the Brand locked up in ADX Florence, Colorado and prison officials think that if they take the head then the body will die. The Brand has been around along time so they have a lot of influence, but overall they have slowly been losing control in both the state and federal prison system due to new cases, infighting and age. A lot of the leaders are dinosaurs.”

## END GAME

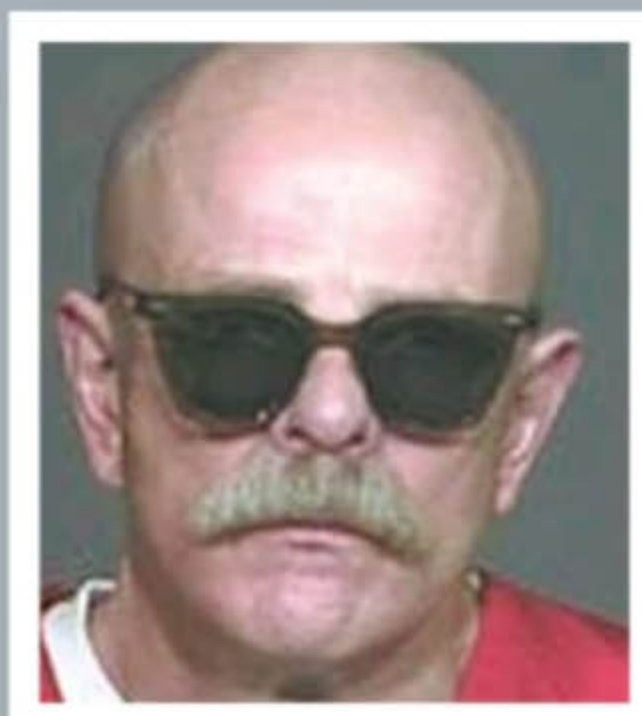
On 28 August 2002, Assistant United States Attorney Greg Jessner indicted virtually the entire leadership of the gang. The indictment reached back 20 years spanning three decades and 32 murders. 40 members were indicted of federal racketeering charges in a 140, ten count indictment. The majority of the gang members were already doing life sentences, so 23 of them were eligible for the death penalty. “This is a homicidal organisation,” Jessner announced. “That’s what they do. They kill people. I suspect they kill more people than the Mafia. They may be the most murderous criminal organisation in the United States.” The indictment was the largest capital case in the history

“THEY WOULDN’T SNEAK UP AND STAB YOU. THEY’D DO IT RIGHT IN THE OPEN.”



## NOTORIOUS MEMBERS

RINGLEADERS AND COLD-BLOODED KILLERS, THESE AB VETERANS HAVE A REP THAT TRANSCENDS THE BARS

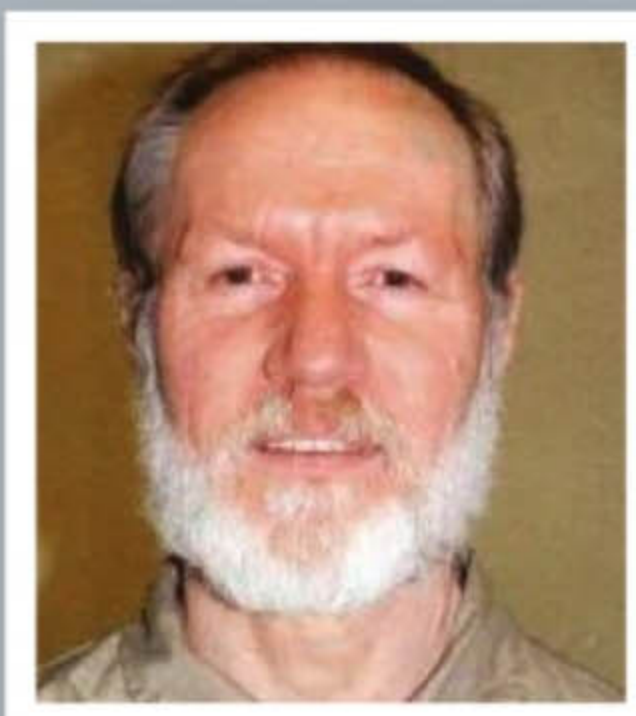


### BARRY ‘THE BARON’ MILLS

The Baron is known as the brain of the Aryan Brotherhood. He is responsible for much of their organisational structure and the formation of the three-man commissions in the California and federal prison systems. A tactical

and innovative gang leader whose word is law, he isn’t afraid to get busy himself when necessary but is equally adept at delegating and passing orders down the line. He is credited with the longevity of the gang’s criminal enterprises.

The Baron is responsible for 14 murders and was convicted of nearly decapitating a man at USP Atlanta in 1979. He became involved with the AB in San Quentin prison in the late 1960s after growing up in Northern California and quickly rose through their ranks as he returned to prison frequently as a young man, finally getting his first life sentence for the near decapitation of a fellow prisoner.



### THOMAS ‘TERRIBLE TOM’ SILVERSTEIN

Terrible Tom was sent to San Quentin at the tender age of 19 and when he was paroled from that short bid he was soon sentenced to 15 years for an armed robbery charge and sent to USP

Leavenworth, an AB stronghold, in 1977. He got involved with the Brand and murdered an inmate to make his bones.

Terrible Tom started the AB-DC Blacks race war by killing Raymond ‘Cadillac’ Smith, the leader of the DC Blacks, in the USP Marion Control Unit where the worst of the worst inmates were housed at the time. Still, Terrible Tom wasn’t finished. In 1983 he killed Correctional Officer Merle Clutts at USP Marion with a prison-fashioned shank for disrespecting him. The Bureau of Prisons had something in store for him. They developed a special isolation cell, cutting him off from the outside world and human contact.



### TD ‘SUPER HONKEY’ BINGHAM AKA THE HULK

The Hulk is a massive specimen of a man who benches 500 pounds and is known as The Baron’s chief enforcer. He is part of the three-man commission that controls activity in the federal prison system.

Up until the massive 2006 racketeering indictment against the Aryan Brotherhood, The Hulk actually was scheduled to get out of prison after multiple decades inside. But with his conviction in that case he now sits alongside his general, The Baron, at ADX Florence doing natural life in total isolation, with hardly any recreation time, and restricted and limited correspondence. The Hulk is another long time AB member, from Northern California, who made his bones in the California Department of Corrections in the late 60s and early 70s before being released, committing more crimes and graduating to the federal prison system.





**“ PRISON IS WHERE THESE GUYS LIVE. WE ONLY PUNCH THE CLOCK ”**

of California and the AUSA indicted the Brand with laws originally passed to target Mafia leaders. “Inmates and others who do not follow orders of the AB are subject to being murdered as is anyone who uses violence against an AB member or anyone who cooperates with law enforcement,” the indictment read.

A main component of the case was the ongoing race war with the DC Blacks prison gang in the feds. The race wars in the federal system started on 22 November 1981 when the body of Robert M Chappelle, a member of the DC Blacks was found dead in his cell at USP Marion. Thomas ‘Terrible Tom’ Silverstein was the killer and Chappelle’s death worried Bureau of Prisons officials who thought it might spark a war, which it certainly did. Raymond ‘Cadillac’ Smith, the alleged national leader of the DC Blacks was the next person killed. In the Marion control unit on 27 September 1982, Terrible Tom stabbed Cadillac 67 times, dragging his body up and down the tier so that those locked in their cells could see.

The race wars against the DC Blacks raged across the feds in the early 1980s and again in the 1990s when two DC Blacks were killed at USP Lewisburg by AB members who

stabbed them 35 and 34 times. Barry Mills and TD Bingham were accused of ordering the killings at USP Lewisburg from their cells at ADX. The case reached back 40 years to include stabbings, strangulations, poisonings, contract hits, conspiracy to commit murder, robbery and narcotics trafficking. Mills, Bingham, Silverstein and 39 other members of the AB received life sentences on top of the life sentences they were already serving. The prosecutors won the case but the jury refused to sentence the leaders to death for their convictions.

The truth of the matter is that the Aryan Brotherhood is not as powerful as they once were, but they have spawned imitators and in prison systems across the nation the Brand has members and associates.

“The legacy of the Brand is the most dangerous white prison gang in the world,” Bumperjack says, and long time members like have come to see what it’s really about. “If you join a prison gang in California its, ‘Blood in, Blood out’ so in reality you just sold your soul to the devil and should plan on living the rest of your existence incarcerated or getting killed by the gang,” he says, succinctly summing up the story of the Brand, the most infamous prison gang in America.

**ABOVE** Three members of an unidentified white power prison gang. There are numerous derivatives of the Brand currently active in the US, including the infamous Aryan Brotherhood of Texas.





LIAR. NARCISSIST. MURDERER

# ARUBA KILLER'S MISSING TRIAL

HIS DEADLY ANTICS SENT THE MEDIA INTO A WORLDWIDE FRENZY WHILE THE CRIMINAL CASE AGAINST HIM SPANNED CONTINENTS. WAS THE SERIAL LIAR JORAN VAN DER SLOOT THE SAME MONSTER THAT KILLED NATALEE HOLLOWAY?

WORDS JOANNA ELPHICK



# KIDNAPPED



Name: Joran van der Sloot  
Kidnapping, First-  
Sexual Assault  
Arata

GREETINGS FROM...

ARUBA

2.00  
1.90  
1.80





**O**n Tuesday 1 June 2010 19-year-old receptionist Adeli Marchena made her way up to room 309 of Lima's Hotel Tac to check on a guest. Joran van der Sloot wasn't answering his phone and the key was missing, which suggested he had left the hotel without paying. Since it would be her job on the line, she decided to take a copy key and deal with it herself. The television was on, but no one was answering the door: perhaps he couldn't hear her. Adeli knocked loudly once more before turning the key and quietly entering the room.

### THE BODY ON THE BED

The first thing that struck her was the unsettling smell. Despite the open window the bedroom reeked, causing the receptionist to gag. The place looked like a war zone, with piles of clothes and belongings heaped everywhere. Adeli turned off the blaring television and called once more, tentatively making her way to the bedroom. Someone was definitely curled up in the bed, but it wasn't van der Sloot, it was a woman – and she wasn't moving. The sexually posed corpse of Stephany Flores Ramirez covered in dried blood was too much for the hotel worker, who fled the room in horror at the gruesome scene.

The Peruvian police were out in force looking for Joran van der Sloot, but they were not the only ones. Law enforcement officers 2,500 kilometres away on the tiny Caribbean island of Aruba were still investigating the disappearance of an 18-year-old student five years previously, and van der Sloot was their number one suspect.

21-one-year-old Stephany Ramirez was the cossetted daughter of wealthy Ricardo Flores, but she was also a troubled woman with a gambling addiction. Her father had already paid off various debts and hoped that she had learnt her lesson. She hadn't.

Family and friends soon pieced together a timeline of her last known whereabouts, and they ended at the Atlantic City Casino, where at 3am she was caught on camera talking to a tall Dutchman. He would later be identified as van der Sloot. She was no doubt flattered by the handsome foreigner's attention, unaware that the FBI were hunting him down,



and his own mother was trying to have him committed. Two hours later another camera showed the pair leaving the casino together. There would be one more sighting of Stephany alive, making her way up to van der Sloot's hotel room in a staggering, almost drugged manner and utterly unaware that she would leave in a body bag.

Before the body had been identified Ricardo Flores was still hoping that his daughter would be found alive and well, but things took a dramatic turn for the worse when a family member internet-searched the CCTV image of van der Sloot and discovered that he was a prime suspect in the murder of another woman that he had picked up in a casino. The similarities were overwhelming and deeply distressing for the Flores family.

It wasn't long before the body was identified, and Captain Juan Callan of the Peruvian national police force was called in while a CSI team scoured the hotel bedroom for clues.

Any doubts that van der Sloot was not the killer quickly evaporated. To begin with, Stephany's body had been dressed in the T-shirt that van der Sloot had been wearing when he led her up to his room. Her nails were jagged, suggesting a violent struggle had taken place before her death. More bloody items of clothing heaped on the floor were bagged and removed for testing. Having sprayed the room with luminol it became apparent that there had been a prolonged struggle.

**ABOVE** Natalee Holloway was a beautiful 18 year old with a fantastic life ahead of her. The trip to Aruba was supposed to mark a new beginning, but it became her final farewell instead

**LEFT** The Holiday Inn, close to the beach and the bustling nightlife, made for a perfect base for the young American students and their attending chaperones







**“ SHE WAS NO DOUBT FLATTERED BY THE HANDSOME FOREIGNER’S ATTENTION, UNAWARE THAT THE FBI WERE HUNTING HIM DOWN ”**

Blood traces glowed tellingly across the room, under the bed and in the adjoining bathroom. They knew who their killer was – now they needed to find where he was.

### HUNTING A HUNTER

Joran van der Sloot was on the run and Interpol were chasing him. But Sloot was no fool and quickly altered his appearance before making his way across Peru. The Dutchman had changed clothes, shaved his head and dyed his stubble orange before mingling with a group of travelling tourists, taking taxis where he could. However, the Chilean border police were on high alert and all the local newspapers ran with van der Sloot’s photograph. It was just a matter of time. A wary tollbooth attendant, suspicious of van der Sloot’s behaviour, radioed ahead to waiting police officers on Highway 68, just outside of Curacaví, and the murderous runaway was finally caught and apprehended.

From the moment of his capture Joran began to spew a torrent of lies. He had indeed stayed at the Tac Hotel but claimed that he had been brutally attacked by Peruvian police while entertaining Stephany Ramirez in his room. It was a cop who had smashed the young girl’s nose and left her for dead. He later stated that he had not been caught but had in fact turned himself in voluntarily in order to help find the killers of his friend Stephany. The Chilean police couldn’t

**ABOVE LEFT** The last known sighting of Natalee Holloway took place at Carlos n Charlie’s, a popular watering hole for young tourists. Van der Sloot and Holloway were seen leaving the club together

**ABOVE RIGHT** A young Joran van der Sloot poses for the camera. His boyish good looks hide a cruel, pathological liar and murderer



## A MONSTER MEETS THE MENTALIST

**VAN DER SLOOT, THE CONSUMMATE LIAR, WASN’T THE ONLY ONE OUT THERE WHO WAS GOOD AT MIND TRICKS**

Van der Sloot explained away the \$25,000 he had extorted from Natalee Holloway’s mother by claiming the world-famous mentalist Uri Geller had given him the money in exchange for his help in exposing an online gambling fraud. Of course, this was yet another fabrication to cover up his cruel communication with Mrs Twitty, but he had actually been approached by Geller to help him with an offer of \$600. This was a ruse on the part of Uri Geller – his real intention was to meet van der Sloot face to face in order to hypnotise him and find out the truth regarding the whereabouts of Natalee Holloway. He hoped that he would be able to extricate a confession out of him on live television. Sadly, the magnificent spoon-bender never got the chance to work his magic.



wait to expel him from their country. He was to be Peru's problem now.

The lies continued back in Lima. One minute he had no job, then he was an international poker player. This was quickly followed with a full description of his career in Thailand where he earned 20,000 euros per year. Eventually he acknowledged that he had struck Stephany in the face – but only once, after she had lashed out at him, before choking her with his bare hands. So Stephany had not been murdered, it was nothing more than self-defence. Stealing her money had been an afterthought and never a motive.

Captain Callan didn't believe a single word and proceeded to put together a 400-page file of witness statements, autopsy reports and photographs along with van der Sloot's own confession to prove his guilt. He was determined to see justice done, not just for Stephany but also for the mysteriously disappeared Natalee Holloway, who went missing five years before.

## HISTORY REPEATED

When police on the Caribbean island of Aruba were shown the CCTV footage of Stephany Ramirez chatting with a handsome stranger in the Atlantic City Casino they experienced a sickening sense of déjà vu: five years earlier they had watched the same predator flirting with some women at the Excelsior Casino on the island. One of them had disappeared later that night, never to be seen again.

Natalee Holloway was an 18-year-old student from Alabama, on holiday with 124 of her senior classmates celebrating their graduation from Mountain Brook High School. Seven chaperones were accompanying them but since the drinking age in Aruba was 18, the adults tended to look the other way and let the kids hang out by themselves in the local bars and clubs.

The Excelsior Casino was situated inside the Holiday Inn where the students were staying, so it quickly became a natural meeting point. Natalee's friend Ruth McVay had already lost some money at the tables and had asked the hunky stranger to help her win it back. Although Natalee liked van der Sloot she wasn't interested in gambling, so the girls soon decided to leave, heading for the nightclub Carlos' n Charlie's instead. Van der Sloot watched the girls leave and then called his friend Deepak Kalpoe for a ride. He just happened to know where a bunch of really cute American girls were spending their last night before heading back home, and he wondered if his friend fancied a good time.

At some point after midnight most of the girls were exhausted and decided to make their way back to the hotel. Natalee and her close friend Lee were the last ones dancing as the other girls waved goodbye and left the club.

The following day, as the girls packed their belongings ready for the long trip back, they soon realised that Natalee was nowhere to be seen. Lee remembered watching her chat to the good-looking man from the casino, but when the bar closed and everybody flooded into the street she couldn't find her. Having pushed through the crowds, Lee figured that Natalee had made her own way back.

Unfortunately, it now seemed that Natalee had never made it to the hotel at all. The Chaperones were informed, and everyone gathered in the lobby of the hotel. One of the boys remembered seeing her leave the club with a couple of young men in a silver car. She had rolled down her window and yelled out at the boys that she was getting a lift back to



**ABOVE** Beneath the shadow of the lighthouse police search the coastal area, looking for Natalee's body

the Holiday Inn. The lads assumed that the silver car was a taxi and thought no more of it.

When Natalee's mother Beth Twitty was informed of her daughter's strange disappearance the chaperones assured her that all would be well – she had probably drunk too much alcohol and was sleeping it off somewhere. Mrs Twitty was not placated. A private jet flew the distraught woman and Natalee's stepfather straight to Aruba where she initiated an immediate search. Natalee's friends had mentioned a fellow tourist called Joran who had been chatting with the girl, but when Betty spoke to the hotel workers she discovered that van der Sloot had been lying to the school party.

He was no visitor but in fact lived on the island and was a regular gambler at the Excelsior. Although this obvious lie terrified Mrs Twitty, the islanders were not in the least bit concerned. She had missed her flight, that's all. Of course, Natalee's mother instinctively knew this was not the case, since her daughter was a responsible, thoughtful girl who would never intentionally cause such a panic.

Having scanned the CCTV footage taken at the casino, Joran van der Sloot was soon identified, and the locals were called out to find him. Having tracked down his family home, Mrs Twitty was horrified to find a silver car parked in the driveway. The police were called, and an extremely irate Paulus van der Sloot was woken up and ordered to get his son out of bed. Joran wasn't home. He was eventually found and picked up at another casino and was brought back to his home for questioning.

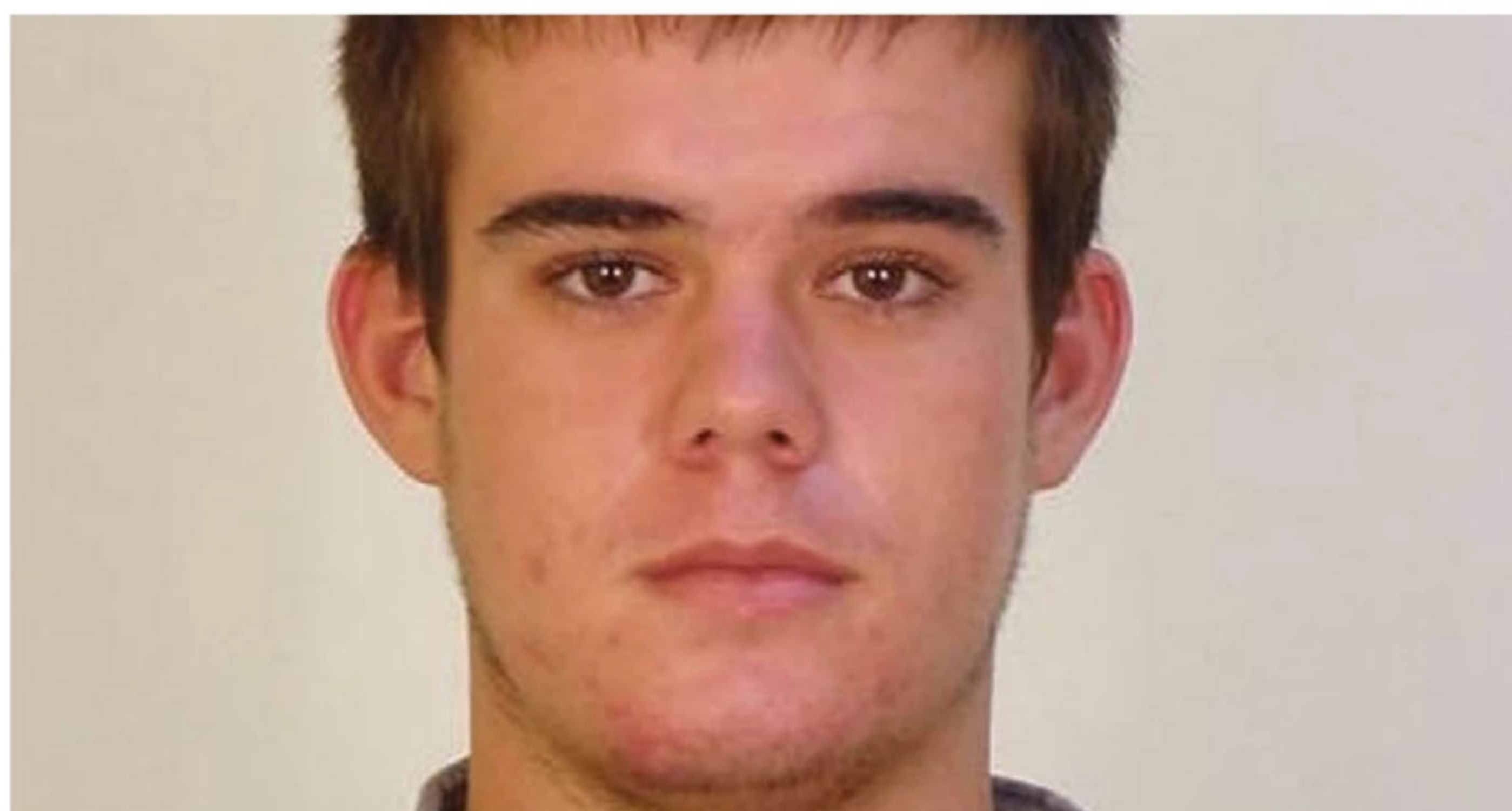
Van der Sloot was happy to admit 'hooking up' with Natalee, going into grotesque detail about their sexual antics in the back of the car while Deepak and his brother Satish

**“ HE JUST HAPPENED TO KNOW WHERE A BUNCH OF REALLY CUTE AMERICAN GIRLS WERE SPENDING THEIR LAST NIGHT ”**



# LIES, LIES AND MORE LIES

OVER THE YEARS VAN DER SLOOT'S STORY OF WHAT HAPPENED THE NIGHT OF NATALEE HOLLOWAY'S DEATH HAS GROWN WILDER AND WILDER



## JUNE 2005 "I DROPPED HER OFF AT THE HOTEL"

Initially Sloot told police that he and Natalee had made out on the beach opposite the Holiday Inn. When he offered to walk her back she had refused, saying she wanted to make her own way. He said she had been alive and well when he went back his parents' house.

## FEB 2006 "SHE OD'D ON THE BEACH"

He was caught on hidden camera confessing to Aruban businessman Patrick van der Eem that he and a friend had dumped Holloway's body out at sea after she had accidentally died of a drug overdose on the beach. The video aired on Dutch television.



## JUNE 2008 "I SOLD HER TO SEX TRAFFICKERS"

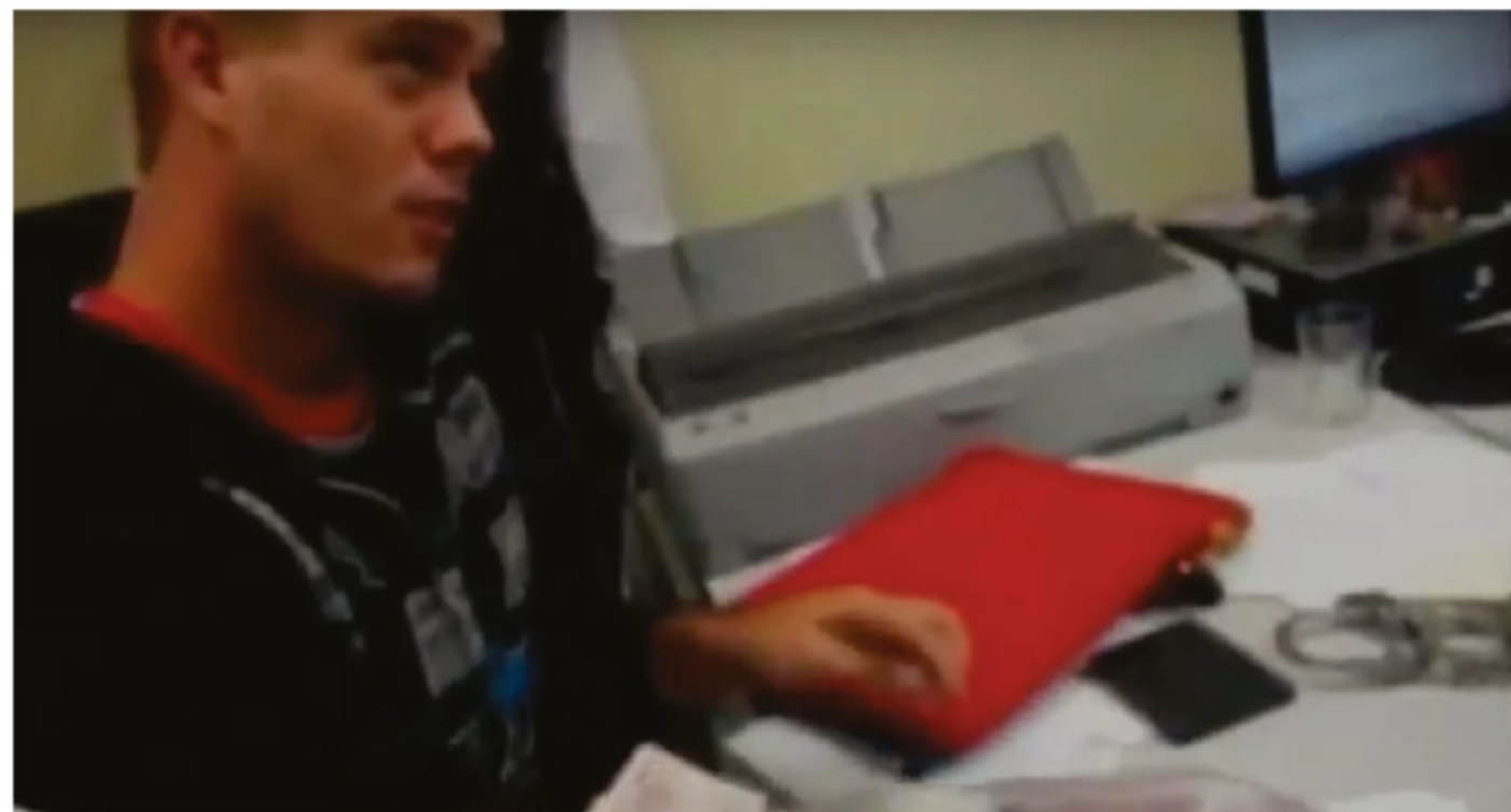
Sloot has been linked to a sex trafficking ring drugging young female tourists and selling them on to European businessmen. He told *Fox News* that Holloway was just another piece of merchandise. He later retracted the comment as a 'mere story' to keep the police happy.

## 2016 "I MURDERED NATALEE"

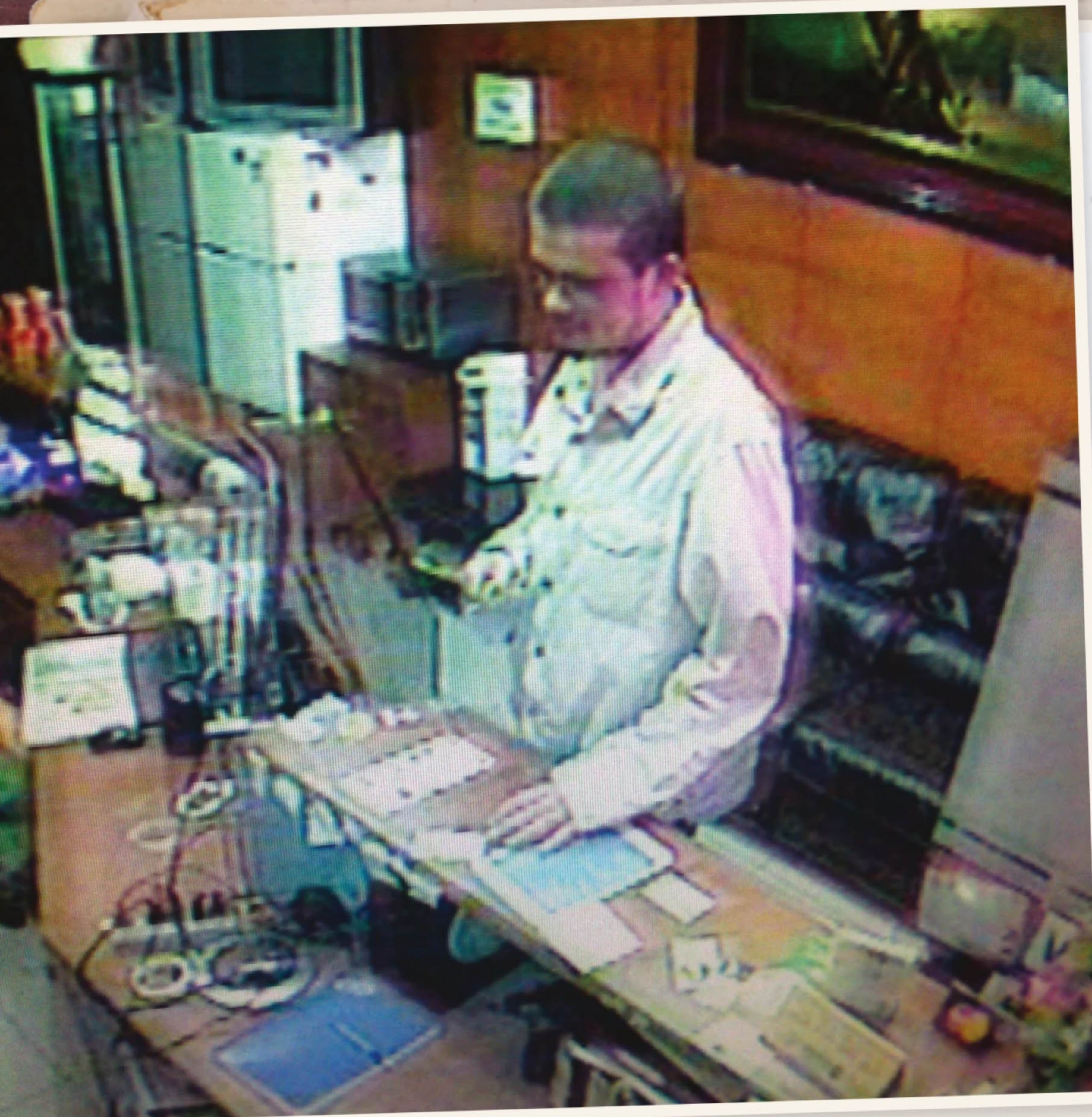
Sloot finally admitted to killing Natalee Holloway in his cell while a cellmate held a hidden camera. Police believe this is no more than a publicity stunt set up by van der Sloot himself and is therefore absolutely meaningless. He never explains how the murder took place but merely professes his guilt.

## 2010 "SHE FELL OFF A BALCONY"

In this version Sloot told the FBI and a Dutch newspaper that he and Holloway had been taking drugs at his friend's house. Holloway had started dancing on the balcony railings but had slipped and plummeted to her death. The friends panicked and decided to hide the body in a swamp.







**“ THE LAST TIME ANYONE CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF NATALEE SHE WAS DISAPPEARING INTO THE DARKNESS WITH VAN DER SLOOT ”**

sat up front. After driving along the coastline for a while, van der Sloot claimed they dropped her off outside the Holiday Inn. Natalee's friends didn't believe him, and neither did the receptionist, who made it clear that nobody had staggered up the steps and into the hotel lobby at that time. At this point van der Sloot's father stepped in, directing his son to stop talking to the Americans. The situation was looking very serious indeed and he did not want a scandal.

Dave Holloway, Natalee's father, joined the group and began his own line of enquiries. What concerned him most of all was the apparent lack of concern on the part of the local police and that every time Joran van der Sloot was interviewed he seemed to tell another version of events. The boy seemed incapable of telling the truth. However,

**ABOVE LEFT** Van der Sloot was caught on CCTV at the front desk of Hotel Tac getting his room key. A few days later he absconded, leaving behind the bloodied corpse of Stephany Ramirez in his room

**ABOVE RIGHT** The bloated corpse of Stephany Ramirez was discovered by a horrified receptionist in van der Sloot's room at Hotel Tac in Lima

having encouraged media attention from CNN, a collection of investigators, including the Royal Dutch Marines, the FBI and hundreds of locals all began searching the beach resorts, bars and walkways close to the hotel.

Camera footage outside the hotel was played over and over. In it, the students could all be identified, laughing and joking as they made their way back to the lobby. At no point did a silver car pull up and let Natalee Holloway out. Van der Sloot and his friends were proved to be lying.

Van der Sloot, Deepak and Satish Kalpoe were arrested on the Dutchman's graduation day. While in his cell, Deepak admitted that it was van der Sloot and Paulus's idea to lie. In truth the brothers had dropped van der Sloot and Natalee off at the remote beach. The last time anyone caught a glimpse of Natalee she was disappearing into the darkness with van der Sloot. Sadly, with no body and no witnesses there was no evidence to charge him. As time slipped by the likelihood of ever finding Natalee or getting her family the justice they deserved seemed ever more unlikely.

### DID HE DO IT?

Joran van der Sloot is currently serving a 28-year sentence in Peru, having been convicted of the murder of Stephany Flores Ramirez. In 2038 he will be extradited to the US to face charges of extortion, having offered to tell Mrs Twitty where her daughter's body is buried for \$25,000. He is, without a shadow of a doubt, a dreadful human being. But is he the killer of Natalee Holloway? His profile strongly suggests he is.

Had he been taken to court for her disappearance and subsequent death, the jury would have heard the overwhelmingly suspicious circumstantial evidence already mentioned, but perhaps most damning of all is the sinister







profile the prosecution would have been able to paint that, sadly, will never be related.

Joran van der Sloot had been a sweet-natured child, but puberty caused dramatic changes in the boy. His sudden sexual awareness instigated aggressive personality traits and violent outbursts that, coupled with his physical growth spurt, made him a terrifying adversary. Both friends and family became increasingly wary of him and avoided confrontation where possible. They had good reason to be fearful, since he regularly attacked his siblings and had set upon strangers in the local bars on numerous occasions with little done to set him off.

The constant stream of pathological lies started around the same time. Van der Sloot was – and still is – incapable of telling the truth. However, at no point has he exhibited psychopathological disorders that would undermine his ability to understand reality. In other words, he continuously lies but is fully aware of it and never believes the fantasies he is spinning – they are merely a means to an end.

He clearly has an anti-social personality with little or no respect for other's feelings, particularly women. This is the sort of character who would think nothing of using a woman for whatever reason and then disposing of her like a used Kleenex tissue. Since adolescence his lifestyle has been hedonistic and irresponsible, which exacerbated his violent tendencies and reinforced his belief that everything and everyone has been put on this earth for his personal pleasure.

His immature emotional state means that he has trouble controlling himself. Should someone dare to criticise him or disagree with his opinions the reaction is swift and violent. We know that van der Sloot lost his temper with frightening ease, and even he acknowledged that killing Stephany Ramirez had come about as a result of her questioning his involvement in the disappearance of Natalee Holloway. Equally telling is the fact that he appears to believe that this was a logical reaction to her critical demeanour, reflecting his opinion that female life is worthless and easily swatted away.

This is a man who has no regard for human life, is self-serving, narcissistic, callous and incapable of emotional empathy. His superficial charm and good looks gave him a

**ABOVE LEFT** Joran van der Sloot relaxes and smokes a cigarette as he is interviewed in his cell where he is serving a 28-year sentence for the murder of Stephany Ramirez

**ABOVE RIGHT** An impromptu memorial for the tragic death of Stephany Flores Ramirez in 2010 popped up on the streets of Lima and was visited by both locals and tourists alike

natural advantage when it came to picking up women, and the drink-fuelled holiday resorts with their dimly lit bars and frivolous casinos were an ideal hunting ground. This is exactly the sort of person you could imagine luring Natalee Holloway onto the shadowy beach, using her for a brief moment of fun and then disposing of her without a second thought. Joran van der Sloot is the man who should probably have been put before a judge and jury, but he never has.

In August 2017 a man by the name of Gabriel Madrigal came forward with some startling news. He claimed that ten years ago he had shared a room with van der Sloot's best friend John. During that time John revealed that van der Sloot had given Natalee a drink spiked with the date rape drug GHB, and the girl had started to vomit. Instead of helping her, he had stood by and watched as she choked to death. Van der Sloot had then contacted his father, Paulus, who met them with a burlap bag to carry the body away in. When he realised that Natalee was not going to fit inside the bag, Paulus began stomping on her legs in order to get her in. The pair then buried her body in a nearby park.

Dave Holloway immediately set about excavating the location. Eventually, a number of bones were discovered. Sadly, Jason Kolowski, the ex-forensic laboratory director of the Washington, DC Department of Forensic Sciences, confirmed later that the DNA extracted was not Natalee Holloway's. Most of the fragments were not even human, although one piece was of Caucasian European ethnicity.

So after 12 long years proving Joran van der Sloot's guilt is no closer to being realised than when Natalee first went missing. The fact that this sadistic, pathological liar is behind bars is of little solace to her heartbroken family. Will the truth ever be known? As retired FBI agent Harold Corpus said, "If his mouth moves, he's not telling the truth."

In 2012, during a conversation caught on a hidden camera, van der Sloot admitted his involvement and claimed, "Yes, this is also where I am guilty, and I accept everything that I have done." Unfortunately in Aruba a verbal confession, even if recorded, is not valid unless later signed in writing and, as van der Sloot himself has previously stated, "I never told the truth". The chances are he never will.



# THE CIRCUS OF HORRORS

THE SAVAGE BLOODLETTING OF CON ARTIST-TURNED-SPREE KILLER EUGEN WEIDMANN SHOCKED 1930s FRANCE, BUT THAT WAS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE GRUESOME GRAND GUIGNOL OF HIS EXECUTION

WORDS ROBERT WALSH

France, like many civilised countries, has long abolished capital punishment. Its final execution was of Hamida Djandoubi in Marseilles on 10 September 1977. In 1981, France finally consigned its guillotines to the history books, but it's further ago yet that 'Monsieur de Paris' was last able to perform his grisly trade before an audience.

The place was Paris, the convict was multiple murderer Eugen Weidmann, the executioner was Jules-Henri Desfourneaux and the date was 17 June 1939.

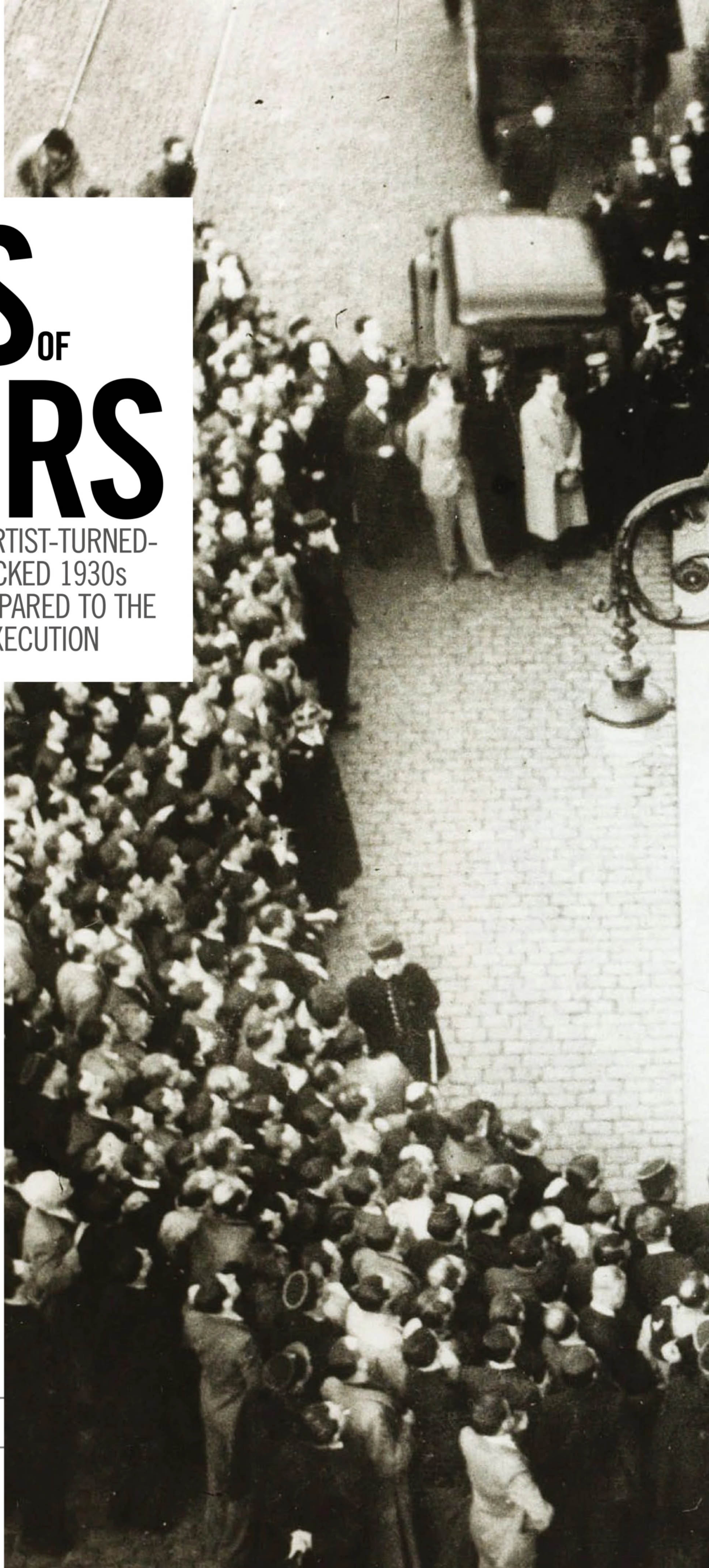
French executioners were once employed locally – so if you were the executioner for Rennes, you'd be known as 'Monsieur de Rennes', 'the Man from Rennes' and so on. In the 19th Century, French executions became more centralised and the chief executioner was required to live in Paris. All executioners acquired the communal nickname 'Monsieur de Paris' regardless of where in France they lived. Even the tool of their trade had a number of nicknames. Many Americans call the electric chair 'Old Sparky', 'the hot seat', 'the hot squat' and various other names. The French gave their guillotines names like 'The Timbers of Justice', 'The National Razor' and 'The People's Avenger.'

## L'ATROCE DÉSIR

Weidmann wasn't a native of France, he was actually German. He was born in Frankfurt-am-Main on 5 February 1908, and like many criminals he started off as a juvenile offender, learning his trade with petty theft, shoplifting and suchlike, eventually serving five years in Saarbrücken Prison for robbery.

Many people who knew him understood that he was already a career criminal devoted to earning a dishonest crust. Little did anybody know what kind of career criminal

**RIGHT** The crowd waits eagerly for Eugen Weidmann's execution outside the prison Saint-Pierre, 17 June 1939











he would eventually become. His crimes shocked the entire nation, and it probably didn't help that Weidmann was German, given the historical baggage between the two countries. His life was one of crime, violence, robbery and greed. His death would prove equally debauched and historic, as France's last public execution. After Weidmann's death, executions would continue in considerable numbers, but, from then until abolition, 'Monsieur de Paris' would administer French justice privately within prison walls.

While serving his five years, Weidmann met two other convicts, Roger Million and Jean Blanc, and together they hatched a plan. They would ignore less lucrative crimes like robbery and burglary in favour of kidnapping for ransom. Weidmann would run the show while his accomplices would simply obey orders, dispose of bodies, cash stolen travellers cheques, fence their victims personal possessions, and so on. Weidmann decided that they would target wealthy tourists and abduct them, demanding large sums for their safe return. As it turned out, the victims wouldn't return safely or even alive. Instead of being released they would be killed and their bodies disposed of.

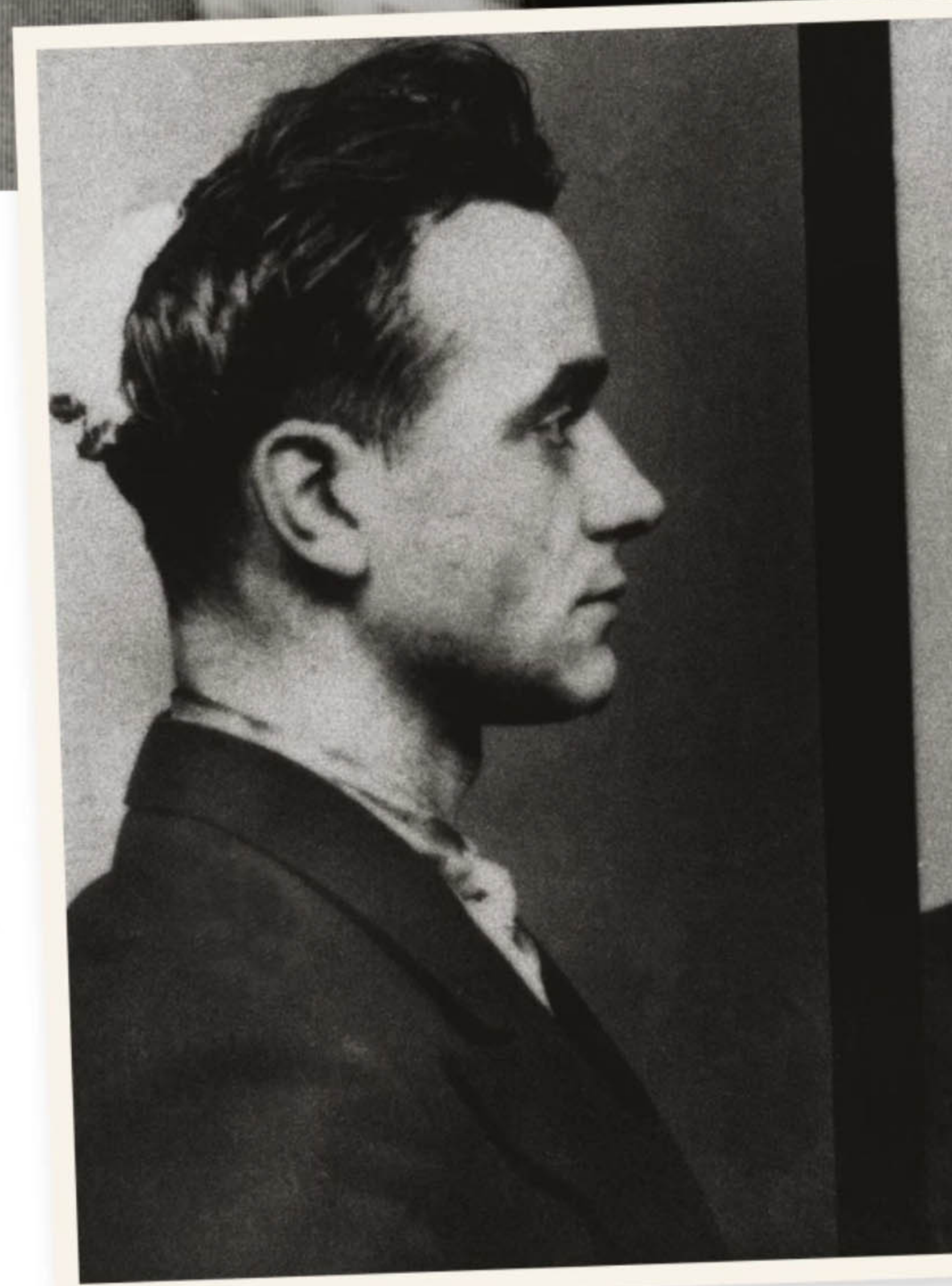
The trio moved to the Paris suburb of Saint-Cloud to begin their crime spree. Paris, being the French capital, was home to its highest concentration of wealthy potential victims. With that in mind, and following the laws of nature, the predators followed their prey. Their first attempt failed. Their intended

victim struggled and escaped. They were determined that subsequent victims wouldn't get off so lightly.

### LA CARESSE QUI TUE

It was 26 July 1937 before the gang made their second attempt. It was successful and brutal. Weidmann had met Jean de Koven, a 22-year-old dancer from New York who was visiting her aunt in Paris. Introducing himself to her as 'Siegfried', Weidmann quickly gained her trust, so much so that she agreed to visit him at his rented villa in Saint-Cloud.

It was a date that started well and ended dreadfully. They drank, smoked and had their photos taken together, which was a bad move on Weidmann's part. The photos were later found beside her body, identifying Weidmann both as the mysterious 'Siegfried' and as her murderer. Weidmann was keen to get the ball rolling. He promptly strangled her, burying her under the stone steps leading into the garden. The haul came to 300 francs in cash and \$430 of travellers cheques. But that wasn't enough for Weidmann. Jean de



**“ WEIDMANN WOULD RUN THE SHOW WHILE HIS ACCOMPLICES WOULD SIMPLY OBEY ORDERS AND DISPOSE OF BODIES ”**



## “ HE PROMPTLY STRANGLED HER, BURYING HER UNDER THE STONE STEPS LEADING INTO THE GARDEN ”

Koven was only the first of his five victims.

De Koven's aunt promptly received a note informing her that her niece had been kidnapped and demanding \$500 for her safe return. Her brother Henry de Koven publicly offered \$10,000 for any information that might secure her freedom. Of course, she was already dead, but her family wouldn't find out until Weidmann's killing spree was uncovered months later. By that point four other victims had also been crossed off his hitlist. He didn't mind trying to extort a ransom for somebody he'd already murdered, either.

### DU SANG DANS LES TÉNÉBRES

On 1 September 1937, Weidmann committed his second murder, that of a chauffeur named Joseph Couffy. He lured Couffy into a secluded forest near Tours, shot him in the back of the head and relieved his corpse of 2,500 francs. Couffy's expensive car was also stolen and sold. On 3 September, Weidmann struck again, this time luring nurse Janine Keller into a cave in the forest around Fontainebleau, one of the nicer suburbs of Paris. It wasn't nice for Janine Keller. She was shot in the back of her head and robbed of 1,400 francs and her diamond ring.

On 16 October, the gang struck again. They promised to invest in productions from theatrical producer Roger LeBlond. Instead, Weidmann shot him in the back of the head and took 5,000 francs from his wallet. Fritz Frommer was an old prison acquaintance of Weidmann's that had been brought into the gang as a general helper, but Weidmann began doubting his reliability. Frommer also knew too much, so Weidmann decided to silence him permanently. On 22 November, he did, shooting him in the back of the head and dumping him in the villa's basement to await burial.

Weidmann's final murder came five days later. Raymond LeSobre was a wealthy real estate agent. Again, LeSobre was lured to a fake business meeting. He met Weidmann to discuss a property that he supposedly wanted to buy. Instead, Weidmann shot him in the back of the neck, stole 5,000 francs and buried him. But the spree couldn't last forever. The French civil police – the Sûreté – employed some of the world's finest detectives. They were under particular pressure because foreigners were disappearing and their Consulates were demanding action. Detectives were already investigating the string of disappearances, and one of them, Inspector Primborgne, got lucky.

### AU SOUS-SOL

Searching LeSobre's office, Primborgne found a business card giving the address of the villa rented by Eugen Weidmann under the name 'Monsieur Kaffer'. The business card belonged to a German named Shott. On questioning Herr Shott, detectives discovered that his nephew Fritz Frommer had recently gone missing. They also discovered that Weidmann had been LeSobre's last appointment before he mysteriously disappeared.

When Weidmann returned home one evening, two

## LIVING WITH THE MEN FROM PARIS

### INSIDE THE SECRETIVE WORLD OF THE FRENCH EXECUTIONER

Execution in France was a family affair. Executioners were known by the disparaging nickname 'Les Bourreaux' and generally shunned by the rest of French society. Schools refused to accept their children. The church usually refused to marry them except to the relatives of other executioners. There were so few volunteers that many regions resorted to pardoning criminals, including the condemned, in return for their services. Families like the Sansons, Deiblers and Desfourneaux supplied generations of executioners to the French penal system. During the 20th Century, all French executioners could trace their ancestry between only a handful of families.

The job, however, wasn't without its perks. Executioners didn't pay taxes, which was handy as the job was comparatively poorly paid. They could claim food and other goods from shopkeepers and merchants for free, as many traders tended to refuse their custom otherwise. They could claim free bread from local bakers, although even this was delivered grudgingly. French bakers kept bread for executioners separated from normal stock, lest it contaminate the bread sold to respectable customers. They even stored it upside down, following a religious custom that bread stored upside down attracted the devil.

detectives were waiting. Introducing himself using his alias, Weidmann played it cool, inviting them in to answer their questions. He then pulled a pistol and fired three shots. Unfortunately for Weidmann, though not for the detectives, his aim was off. He missed, was overpowered and arrested. The Sûreté weren't entirely sure who they had, but they definitely knew he merited further investigation. What that investigation uncovered shocked the entire French nation.

They didn't have to dig too deeply. Fritz Frommer's body was soon discovered in the villa's basement. As if that wasn't bad enough, detectives also noticed that the front steps had recently been lifted and replaced. Not surprisingly under the circumstances, they feared the worst. They removed the steps to discover the body of Jean de Koven.

Once he realised the game was up, Weidmann was entirely co-operative with interrogators. He admitted his real identity and confessed to all the murders, only showing remorse for the murder of de Koven. He claimed he felt guilty about his first victim but, like so many multiple murderers, the more Weidmann killed, the less he felt. He also obliged detectives by naming the other members of the gang. They were promptly rounded up and taken into custody to await trial.

### LES CADAVRES VIVANTS

The trial was the biggest media circus since that of the notorious Henri Désiré Landru, known as 'Bluebeard'. Landru had been tried and executed for a series of murders



**ABOVE** Weidmann's mugshot. That the killer was German fuelled patriotic fervour as the prospect of war with France's Eastern neighbour loomed over 1938 and 1939.

**ABOVE LEFT** Weidmann appears in court with his mother, 30 December 1937. The trial lasted three weeks and scandalised the City of Light.



## “WOMEN RUSHED FORWARD TO DIP HANDKERCHIEFS AND EVEN THE HEMS OF THEIR SKIRTS IN WEIDMANN’S BLOOD”

18 years earlier and one of his lawyers, Vincent de Moro-Giafferi, also defended Weidmann. Retracting his confession, Weidmann claimed police had beaten it out of him and insisted on denying all the charges. Weidmann’s minions tried to keep a lower profile and attract less disgust for their part in his crimes. They hoped that by leaving Weidmann to attract all the attention their role in the murders might be downplayed enough to avoid the guillotine.

Their ploy worked, in a fashion. Weidmann was condemned to death. So was Million, although he was later reprieved. Million’s clemency might at first seem like an act of mercy but for one thing. In France, a commuted death sentence automatically meant a sentence of life imprisonment. That life sentence was automatically served at the notoriously hideous penal system in French Guyana, known to the world as ‘Devil’s Island’. So it was mercy of a kind, but with a particularly nasty rider attached. Blanc drew 20 months’ imprisonment. Blanc’s mistress Tricotte (who had cashed de Koven’s travellers cheques) was acquitted, gratefully disappearing into obscurity. It wasn’t long before Weidmann would pay the ultimate penalty.

If the trial was a circus, the execution was, by civilised standards, a travesty. The guillotine and its executioners arrived at Saint-Pierre Prison in Paris (now the site of the Palace of Justice) on 16 June 1939. They set up their ‘People’s Avenger’ and tested it. It worked efficiently and without a problem, although, once Weidmann’s weight was on it, it proved more troublesome.

All the ‘National Razor’ needed now was somebody to give the ultimate haircut. Weidmann’s appeal had already been denied and the president of France, Albert LeBrun, had also refused to grant a presidential reprieve. LeBrun wasn’t a hard-line supporter of the guillotine; he’d reprieved other condemned inmates (albeit to the not-so-tender mercies of Devil’s Island). In Weidmann’s case, however, he could find no reason to show mercy. Neither, come to that, had Weidmann ever shown mercy himself.

### LE SANG DE LA BÊTE

At dawn on 17 June, Eugen Weidmann walked his last mile. He was brought from his cell to the prison yard and prepared for execution. His shirt collar was removed with scissors. His arms were tied behind his back. His ankles were tied so he could walk, but not run. In a curious twist of French bureaucracy, some paperwork now had to be completed paroling Weidmann from the prison into the very temporary custody of executioner Jules-Henri Desfourneaux and his assistant (and cousin) Andre Obrecht. Two other assistants, Georges Martin and Henri Sabin, were also on hand to position Weidmann beneath the National Razor. With the preparations and paperwork completed, Eugen Weidmann was ready to die.

Outside the prison, a huge crowd had gathered and they weren’t well-behaved. The reason was simple, many of them had spent much of the previous day and all the night in the cafes and bars near the prison and were very, very drunk. These cafes and bars had even been allowed to open all night for the occasion to continue serving them. They were noisy, and they pushed, shoved and jostled for a better view when

the blade dropped. A barrier had been erected 50 metres from the guillotine and the waiting crowd pushed back. One woman was injured in the scrum and was forced into a nearby cafe to recover. The police began ordering rubber-neckers down from the roofs of nearby buildings.

At the appointed time, the executioners brought Weidmann out to the guillotine. He was laid face down on a movable board, the bascule, and shunted forward so his throat rested on the neck piece. A second neck piece was eased downward, enclosing the back of his neck. At a signal from the prison governor, chief executioner Desfourneaux pulled a small lever. The 14-pound razor-sharp blade descended, a thick burst of blood splashing in all directions. Weidmann’s head tumbled into the basket while his body fell from the bascule into a large wicker coffin beside the guillotine. It was over in minutes. The debauched behaviour of the crowd, unfortunately, wasn’t.

Women rushed forward to claim souvenirs, dipping handkerchiefs and even the hems of their skirts in Weidmann’s blood. An enterprising journalist, defying official rules, had rented a room overlooking the guillotine and managed to film the execution. The filming was illegal, but blame was given to the executioner. Desfourneaux had broken with tradition, setting the time for Weidmann’s execution using Greenwich Mean Time instead of Paris time. In summer, GMT is two hours behind Paris time, thus ensuring that Weidmann died in bright sunlight (and on camera) instead of the traditional pre-dawn gloom that would have made filming almost impossible. Today, the notorious footage, lasting less than a minute from start to finish, has been uploaded to YouTube for those with the stomach to watch it.

### INCOGNITO TRAGIQUE

Further criticism was levelled at Desfourneaux and his assistants when it was discovered that the guillotine had been improperly assembled, forcing the executioners to be rough with Weidmann while positioning him and making the spectacle last somewhat longer than it should have. Critics also pointed to Desfourneaux’s inexperience as chief executioner, Weidmann being only his fifth execution as chief. His predecessor, Anatole Deibler, had died of a heart attack earlier that year while on his way to perform his 401st execution. Desfourneaux, while an experienced assistant, had only pulled the lever twice under Deibler’s supervision and twice more as chief before executing Eugen Weidmann.

There was also a celebrity witness in the form of a young 17-year-old Englishman then staying



LEFT A replica of the 1872 model guillotine, most likely still in use - albeit it with modifications - in 1939.







in Paris. The young man's name was Christopher Lee, later distinguished actor Sir Christopher Lee of Hammer horror, *Lord of the Rings* and *Star Wars* fame. Yes, that Christopher Lee, making possibly his first horror movie appearance (albeit uncredited). Lee makes only brief reference to Weidmann's execution in his memoirs. It rates no more than a couple of lines, but it's worth noting that, as a result of watching Weidmann die, Lee was unafraid of anything the horror movie business might send his way.

As a result of the debauched scenes surrounding Weidmann's execution, the French authorities decided something had to be done. French President Albert LeBrun immediately banned any further public executions in France, a ban that continued until the abolition of capital punishment in France in 1981. To quote philosopher Michel Foucault: "Witnesses who described the scene could even be prosecuted, thereby ensuring that the execution should cease to be a spectacle and remain a strange secret between the law and those it condemns."

Today 'Madame la Guillotine' is a historical relic, a symbol of a bygone age of cheering crowds, splashing blood, and Revolutionary justice. As a member of the European Union, France is obliged to see that it stays that way.

**ABOVE** Eugen Weidmann is led away by the police following questioning, 21 December 1937. Weidmann confessed all too gleefully, saying of de Koven: "When I reached for her throat she went down like a doll"

# JUSTICE HAS A SHARP BLADE

THE GUILLOTINE WAS USING IN FRANCE FOR OVER HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

**1,278 LBS** Weight of the entire Guillotine

**88 LBS**  
Weight of the blade

The blade falls in  
**7/10THS OF A SECOND**

**8 FEET AND 4 INCHES**  
Distance the blade dropped

**2 TO 5 SECONDS**  
Some consciousness remains in the head

The head is severed in  
**2/100THS OF A SECOND**



**247 MEN**



**8 WOMEN**

were guillotined in France in the 20th Century, until the practice was finally abolished in 1981



# STRANGE CASE!

WHERE OHIO, USA WHEN 2002-2014

## POOL TOY SEX PERVERT PUBLIC INDECENCY

AN OHIO MAN KEEPS HAVING SEX WITH INFLATABLE POOL RAFTS DOWN ALLEYWAYS, AT THE SIDE OF ROADS AND IN FRONT OF NEIGHBOURHOOD CHILDREN

**A**n Ohio man with a long history of public indecency convictions has been arrested for having sex with an inflatable pool raft... three times!

Dubbed the Pool Toy Sex Pervert by talk show host Conan O'Brien, Edwin Charles Tobergta III from Hamilton, Ohio, was first caught with a pink inflatable raft in the summer of 2011. His unwitting neighbour – whom he had stolen the raft from – came across Tobergta on top of the raft, gently humping it in an alleyway.

"The witness stated the defendant appeared to be having sex with the raft due to the fact that his pants were down around his ankles," an officer said in the official police report. Tobergta was sentenced to 12 months in prison for public indecency.

Two years later, Tobergta was arrested yet again for having public sex with a neighbour's lilo in June 2013, but this time he was naked on his back porch and in front of a group of unsuspecting children. It's unclear whether the lilo was the same one from the incident in 2011, but it was also pink.

Neighbour Theresa Teague called the police after her ten-year-old daughter saw Tobergta getting acquainted with the raft while she was swimming in her garden. The girl ran into her house and said: "Edwin was doing something weird out there."

"He was yelling 'please forgive me. I won't do it again. Don't call the police,'" said Teague. But unluckily for Tobergta, she figured his word meant nothing by this point.

Tobergta was sentenced to 11 more months in prison by Butler County Common Pleas Court Judge Charles Pater the following September. Judge Pater said: "This is about lewd, obscene behaviour in the presence of,

RIGHT Tobergta in 2011, after being arrested for public indecency



**“ HE HAS A LOT OF MENTAL PROBLEMS AND HE’S ALWAYS HAD A FASCINATION FOR PLASTIC ”**

especially in this case, little children. That's something society is not going to tolerate." In court, Tobergta appeared to regret the incident, saying: "I do want to apologise for my actions. I am very sorry. I do deal with mental issues and if the court will give me the chance... I will give it 100 per cent. I am ready to get my life together."

He struck again in 2014, however, and was seen having simulated sex with another raft at the side of a road in Hamilton. He was quickly taken into custody and charged with public indecency and contempt of court.

36-year-old Tobergta's string of float-related crimes started in 2002, when he was found having public sexual relations with an inflatable pumpkin. The pumpkin itself was part of a neighbourhood Halloween display.

Grandmother Linda defended Tobergta, and told the *Cincinnati Enquirer* that he suffered from attention deficit disorder and has a history of abusing his medication. "He has a lot of mental problems and he's always had a fascination for plastic," she said. "That's just it. That's all of it. We never could get the proper care for Edwin. It's like nobody cares."



# THOSE WHO LAY TOGETHER, SLAY TOGETHER...

Meet some of the sickest partners in crime and find out how these killer couples have corrupted, ruined and devastated the lives of those around them



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